US008700505B2

(12) **United States Patent**
McCrea

(10) **Patent No.: US 8,700,505 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: Apr. 15, 2014**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR IMPROVED TIME REPORTING AND BILLING**

(75) Inventor: **Frank McCrea**, Toronto (CA)

(73) Assignee: **Keal, Inc.** (CA)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 1877 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/514,203**

(22) Filed: **Sep. 1, 2006**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2007/0094110 A1 Apr. 26, 2007

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 10/862,762, filed on Jun. 7, 2004.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G07F 19/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC **705/34**; 705/8

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 705/34
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

6,574,605	B1 *	6/2003	Sanders et al.	705/7.26
7,117,162	B1 *	10/2006	Seal et al.	705/7.15
2002/0165749	A1	11/2002	Northcutt et al.	
2003/0033167	A1 *	2/2003	Arroyo et al.	705/1
2005/0197913	A1 *	9/2005	Grendel et al.	705/26
2007/0094110	A1	4/2007	McCrea	
2008/0120152	A1	5/2008	McCrea	

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

U.S. Appl. No. 12/318,605, filed Dec. 31, 2008.
www.brainhunter.com see attached excerpts.
www.teksystems.com see attached excerpts.
www.taleo.com.
www.beeline.com.
www.procurestaff.com.
www.iqnavigator.com see attached excerpts.
www.cncglobal.com see attached excerpts.
U.S. Appl. No. 10/862,762, filed Jun. 7, 2004.
Office Action dated Mar. 18, 2009 issued on U.S. Appl. No. 10/862,762.

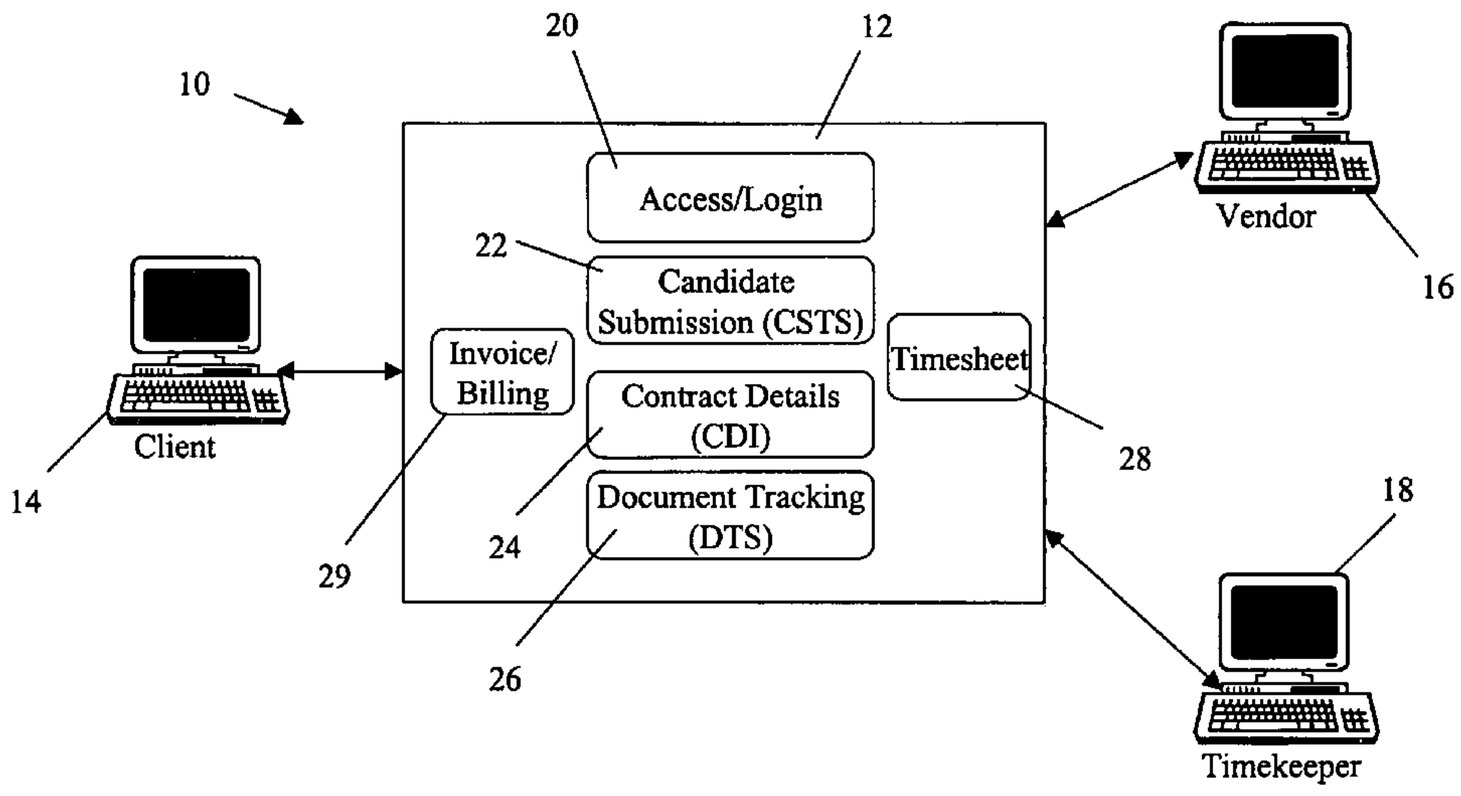
* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Garcia Ade
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Merek, Blackmon & Voorhees, LLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides an integrated time reporting and billing solution that facilitates billing and payment for time-related activities and manages contract workflow from end to end. The present invention can be employed in any industry for any employment relationship where in-house or supplemental contract labor is tracked by time. In one embodiment, the invention includes a contractor submission and tracking system (CSTS) and back office workflow management system (BOSS) to track and report vendor activity and contractor spend. The present invention can be used by employer-clients, contractors and contractor suppliers to facilitate contractor requisition, contract creation and modification, document tracking, business rule implementation, reporting, communications, timesheet entry, timesheet approval, and billing presentment, payment and other aspects of contract workflow management.

22 Claims, 68 Drawing Sheets



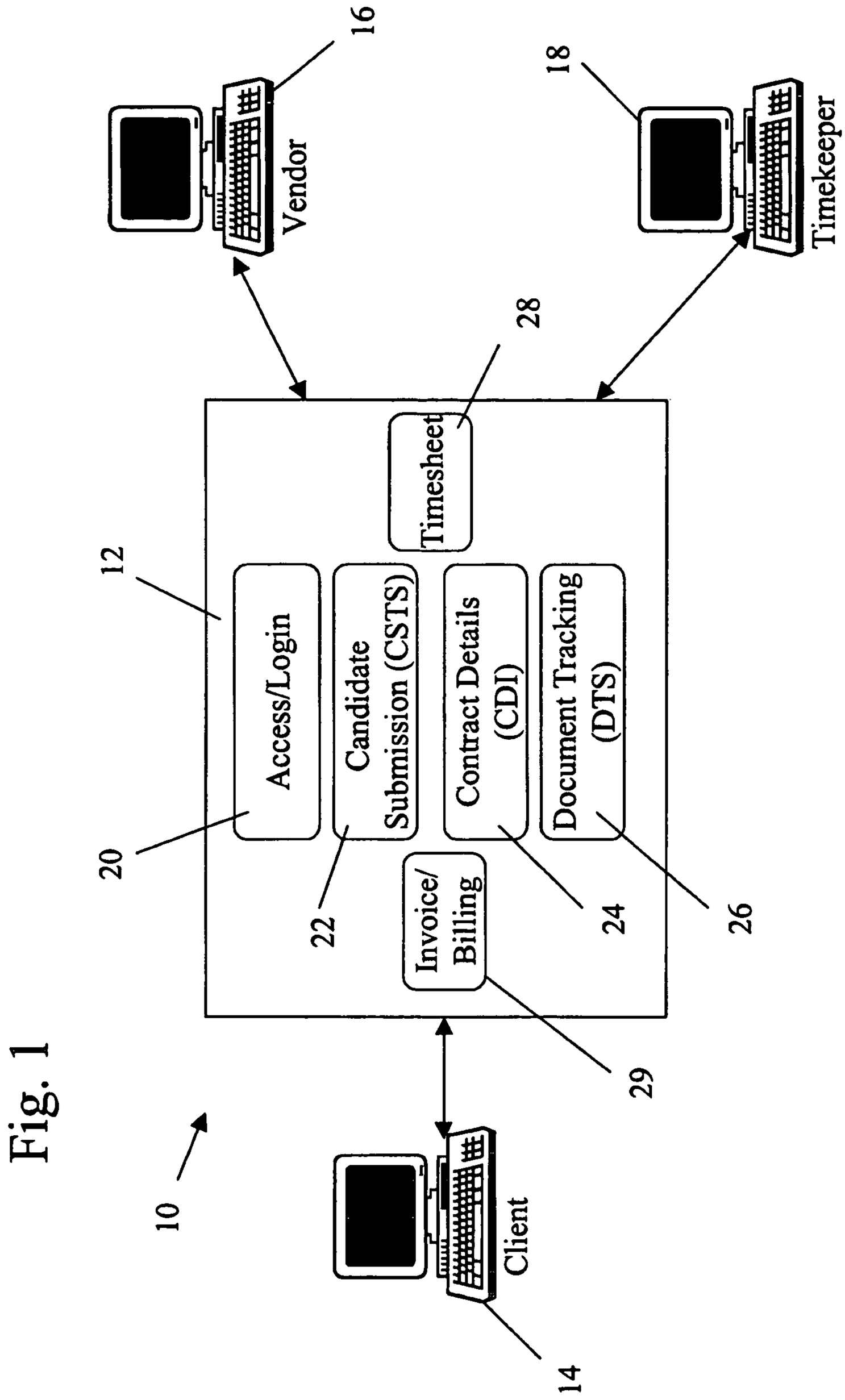

16
Vendor
18
Timekeeper
28
12
Timesheet
Access/Login
Candidate Submission (CSTS)
Contract Details (CDI)
Document Tracking (DTS)
20
22
24
26
Invoice/ Billing
29
10
Client
14

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

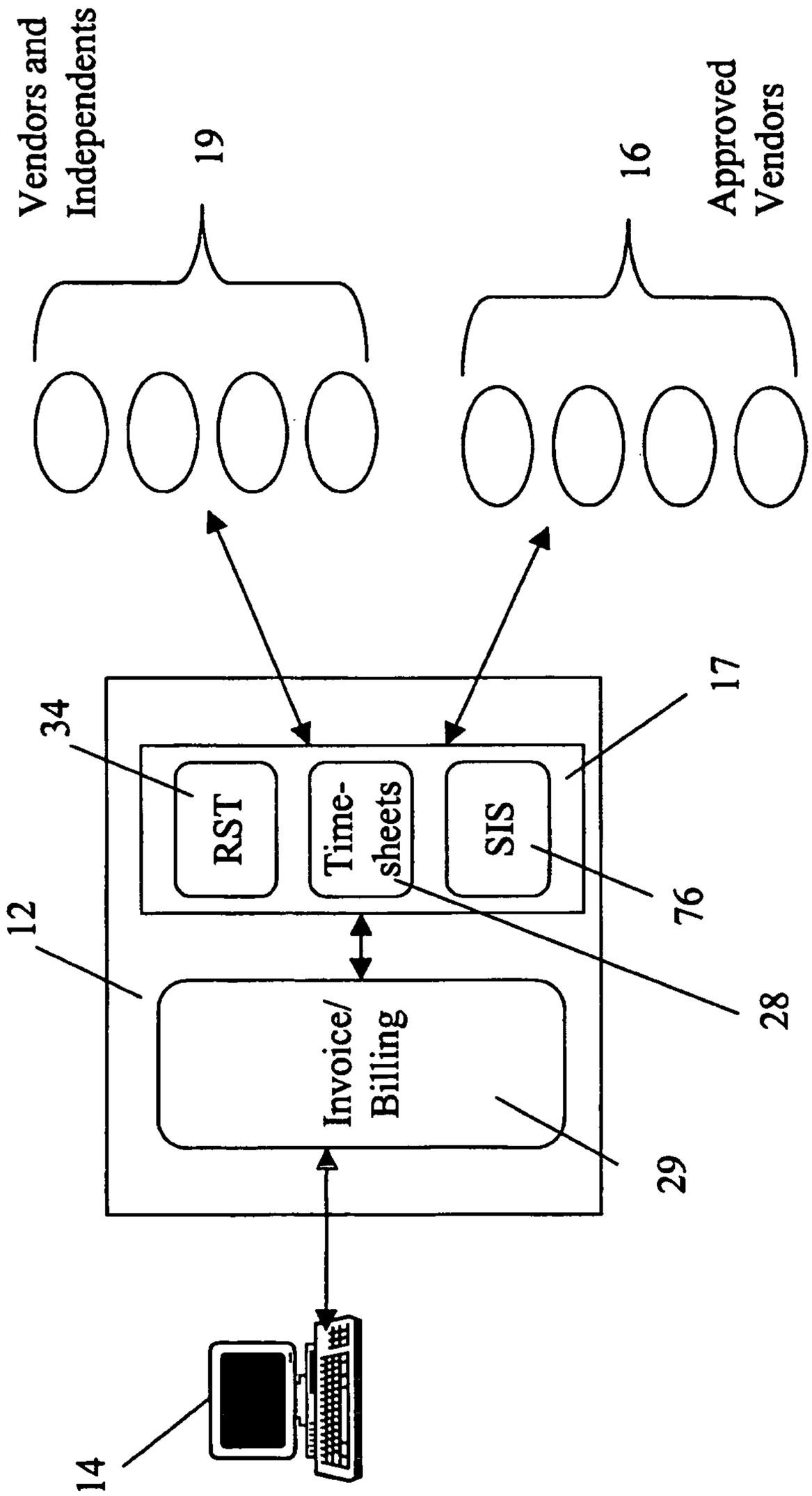

Sub-Tier Vendors and Independents
19
16
Approved Vendors
34
RST
Time-sheets
SIS
17
76
12
Invoice/ Billing
28
29
14

Fig. 3

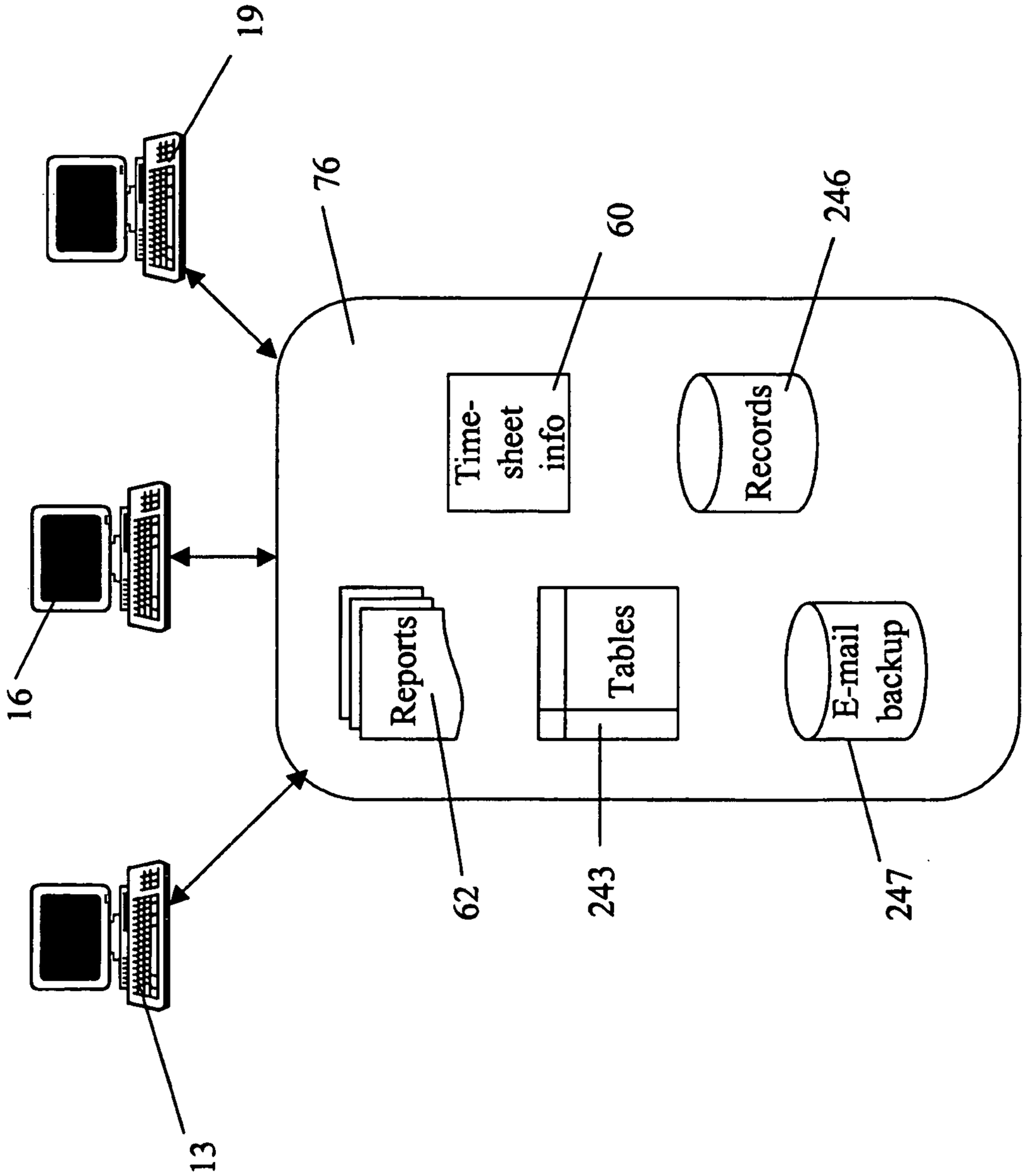

19
76
60
246
Time-sheet info
Records
16
Reports
Tables
E-mail backup
62
243
247
13

Fig. 5

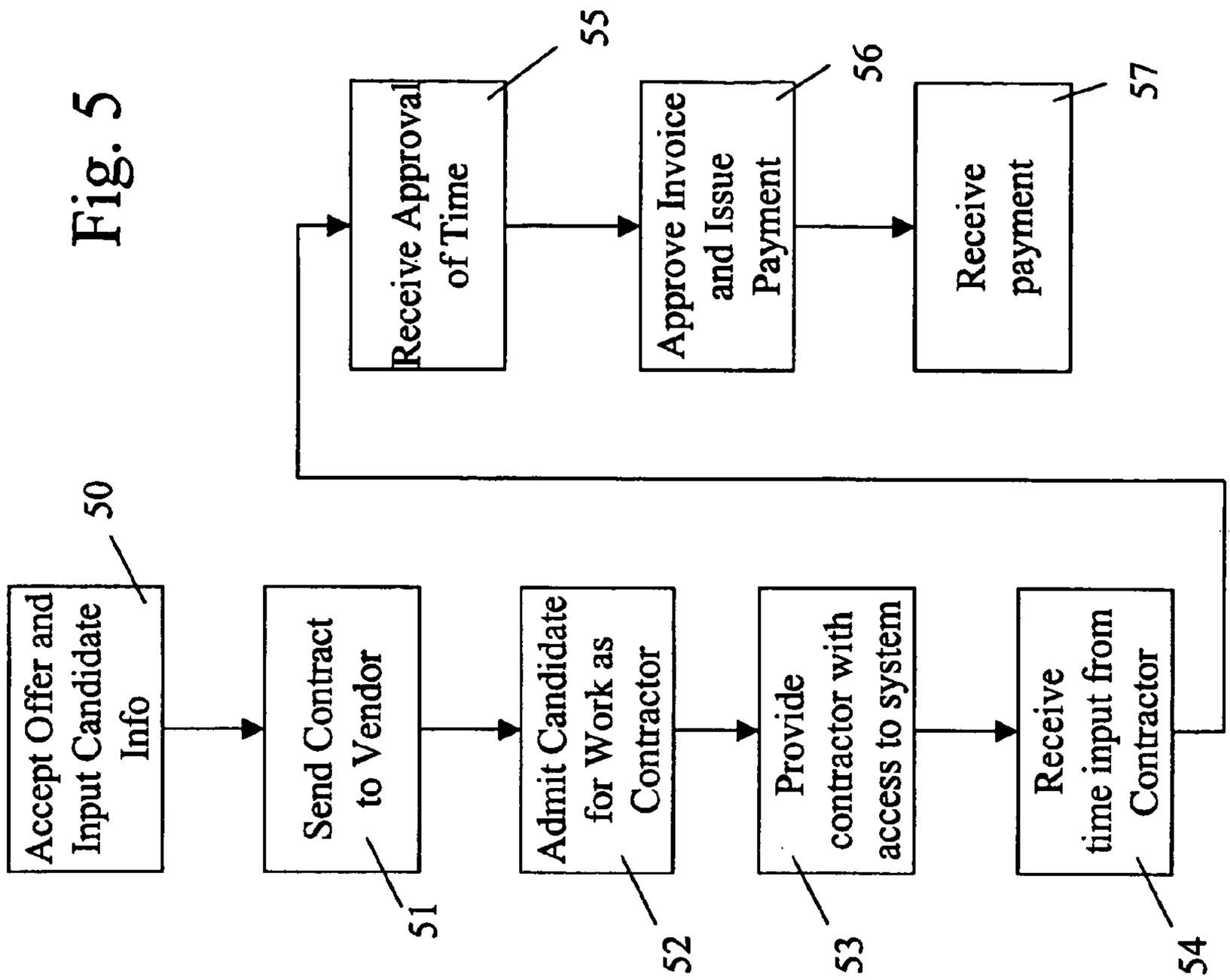
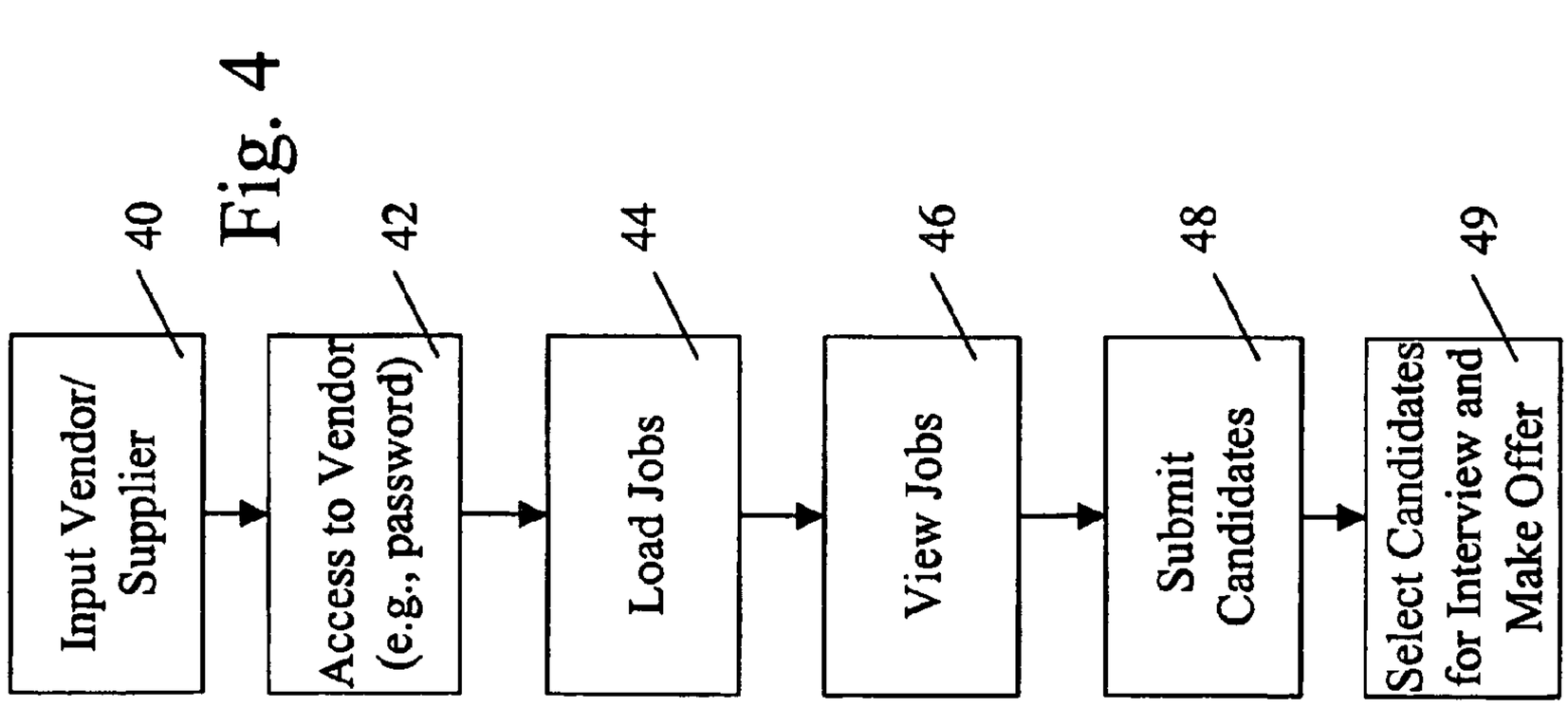

Accept Offer and Input Candidate Info
50
Send Contract to Vendor
51
Admit Candidate for Work as Contractor
52
Provide contractor with access to system
53
Receive time input from Contractor
54
Receive Approval of Time
55
Approve Invoice and Issue Payment
56
Receive payment
57

Fig. 4


Input Vendor/ Supplier
40
Access to Vendor (e.g., password)
42
Load Jobs
44
View Jobs
46
Submit Candidates
48
Select Candidates for Interview and Make Offer
49

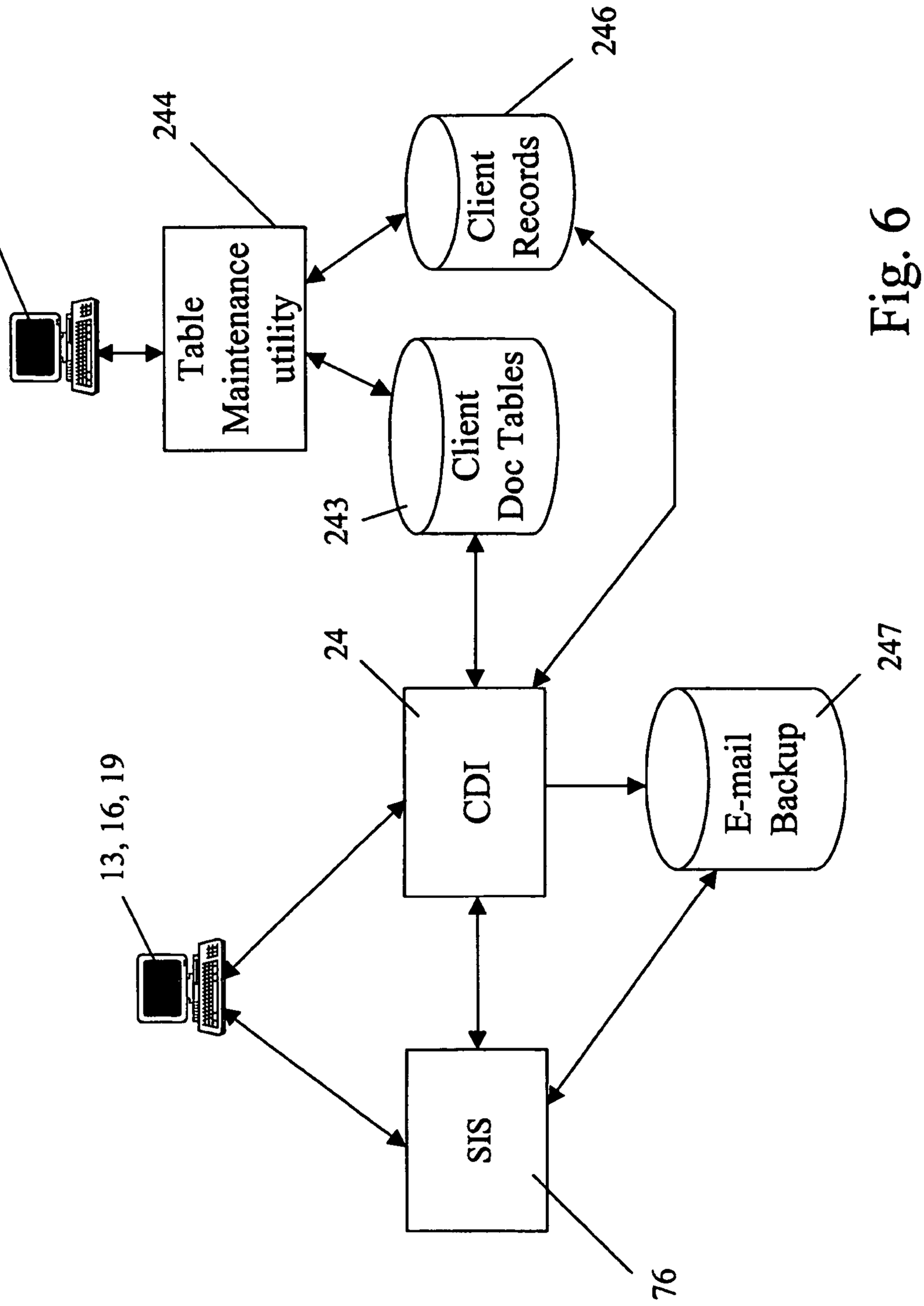

13
244
246
Client Records
Table Maintenance utility
243
Client Doc Tables
24
CDI
E-mail Backup
247
13, 16, 19
SIS
76

Fig. 6

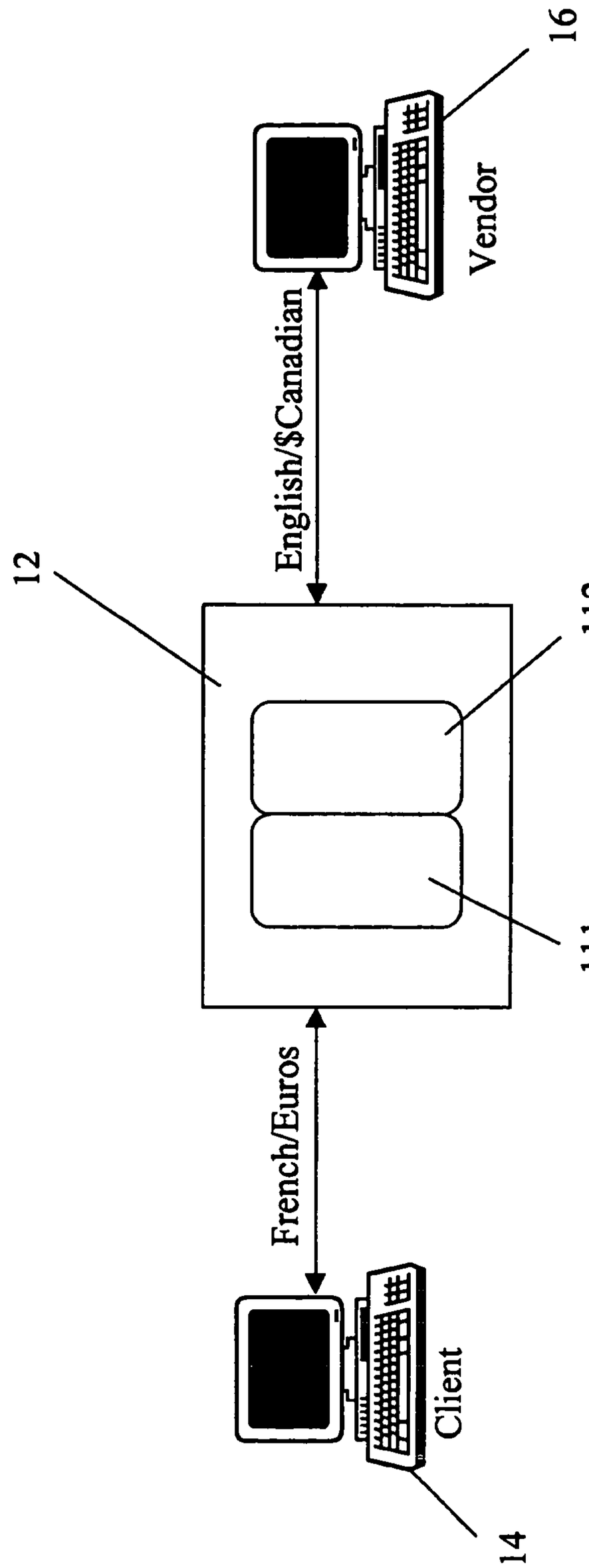

16
Vendor
English/$Canadian
12
112
111
French/Euros
Client
14

Fig. 7

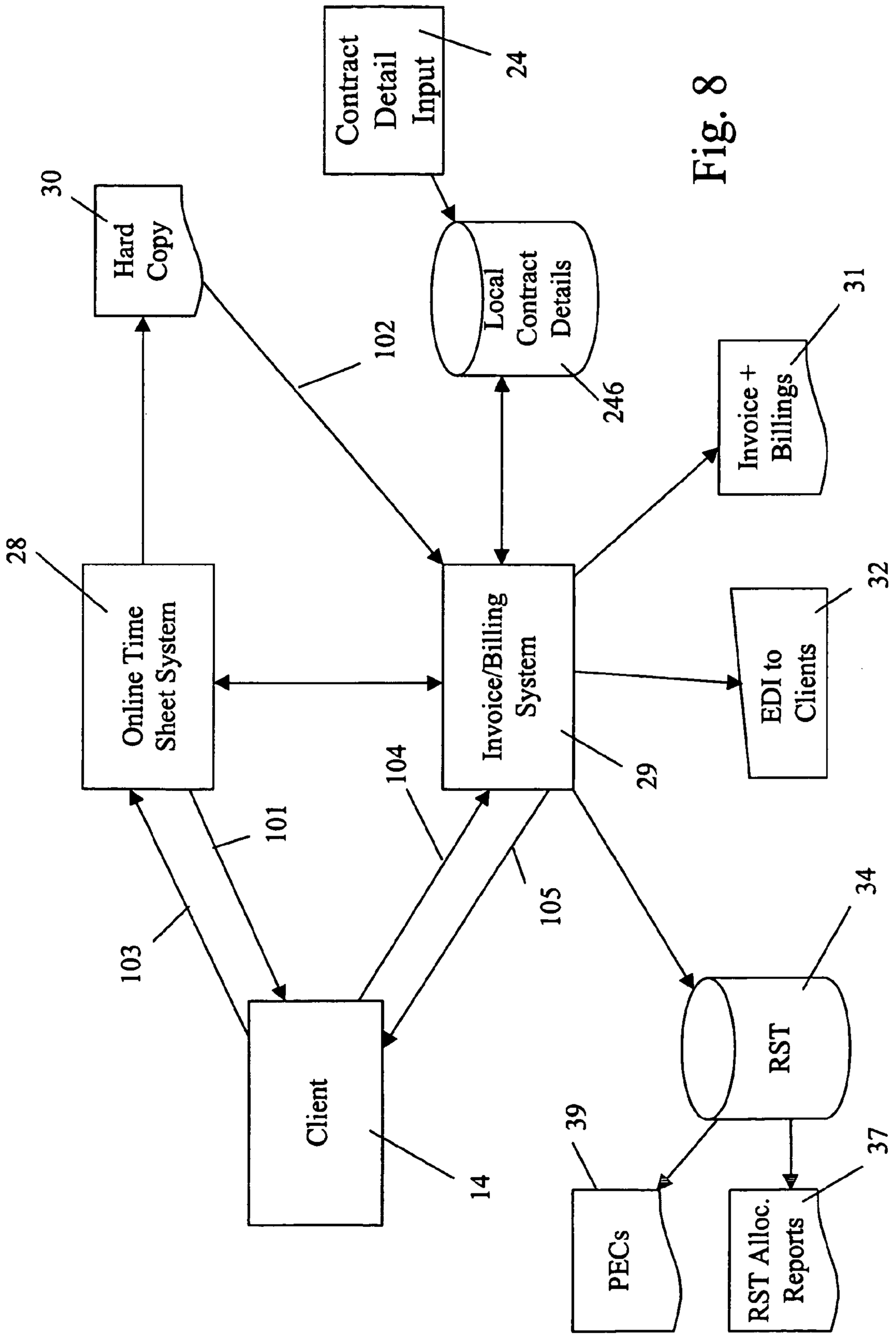

Contract Detail Input
24
30
Hard Copy
Local Contract Details
246
102
31
Invoice + Billings
28
Online Time Sheet System
Invoice/Billing System
29
EDI to Clients
32
101
104
103
105
34
Client
14
RST
39
37
PECs
RST Alloc. Reports

Fig. 8

Fig. 9

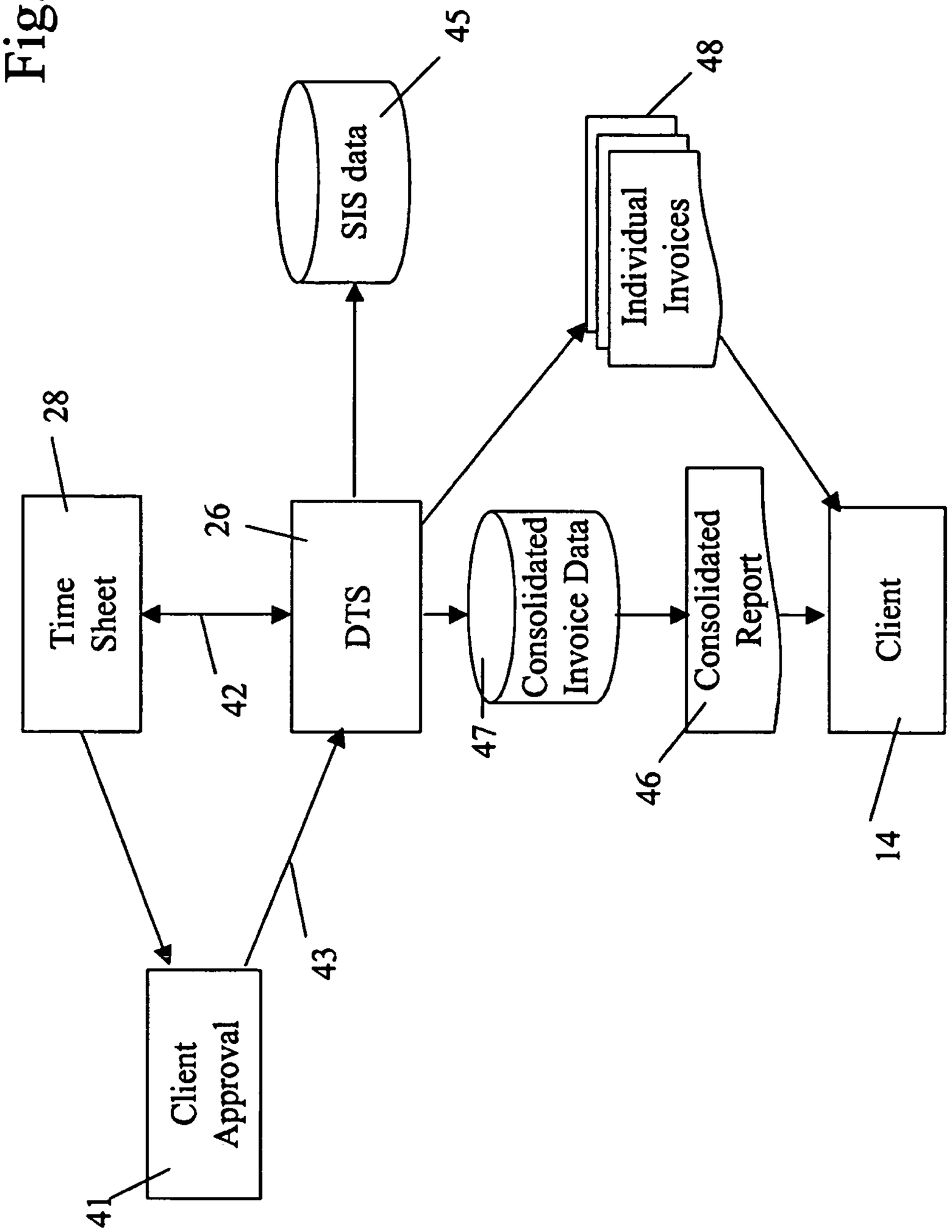

Time Sheet
28
42
DTS
26
SIS data
45
Individual Invoices
48
Consolidated Invoice Data
47
Consolidated Report
46
Client
14
Client Approval
41
43

Fig. 10

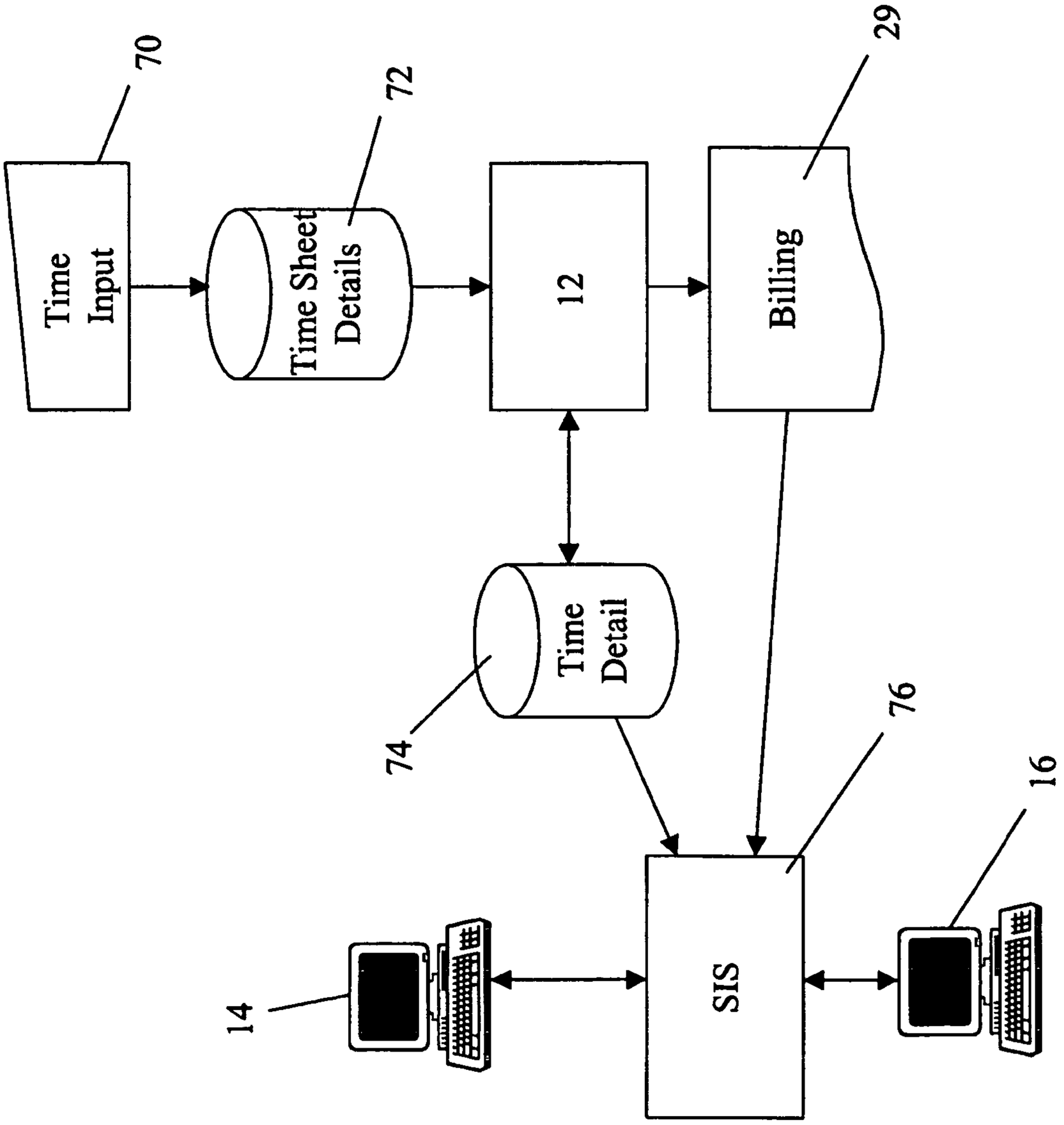
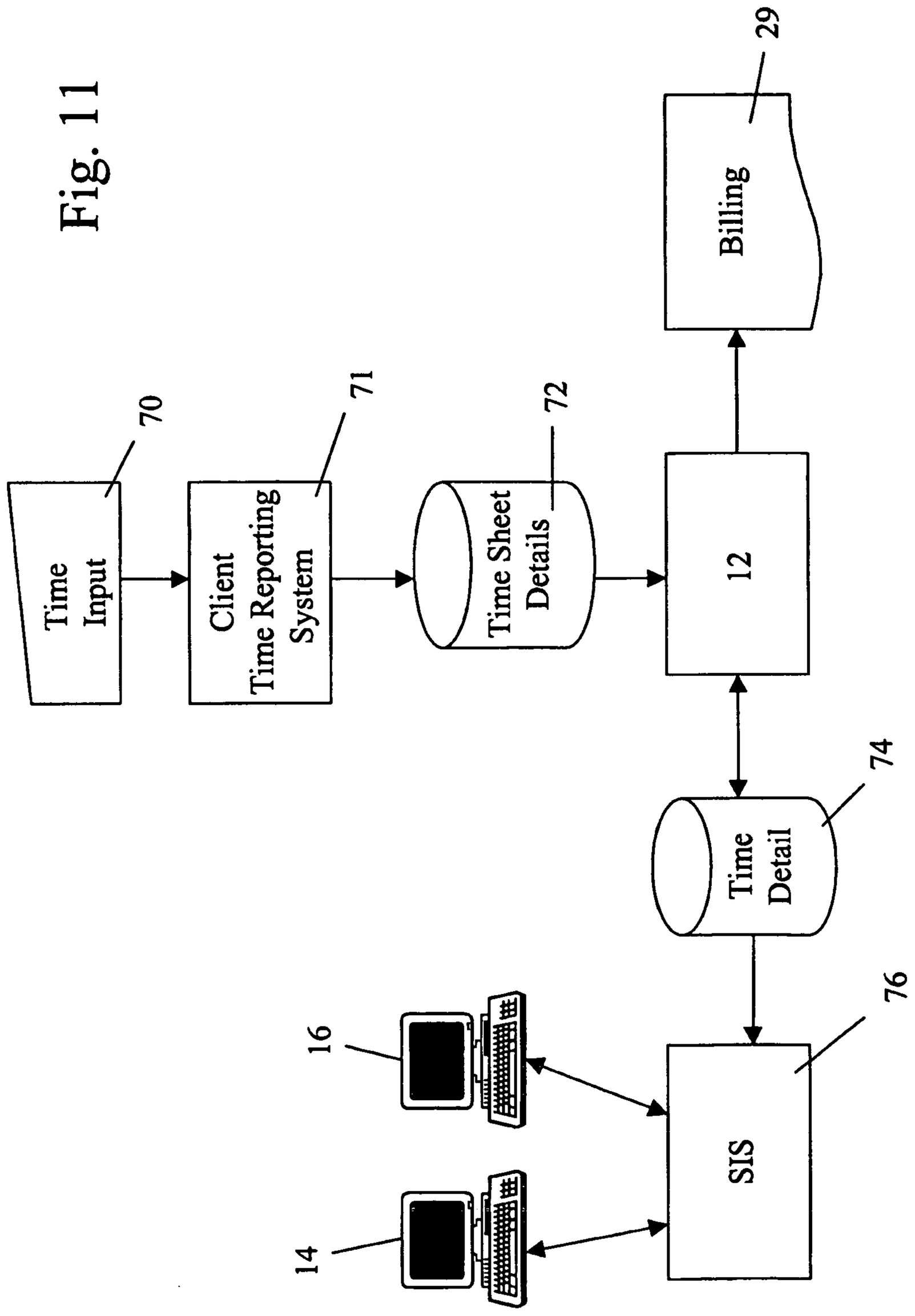

70
Time Input
72
Time Sheet Details
12
29
Billing
74
Time Detail
76
16
14
SIS

Fig. 11


Billing
29
Time Input
70
Client Time Reporting System
71
Time Sheet Details
72
12
Time Detail
74
SIS
76
16
14

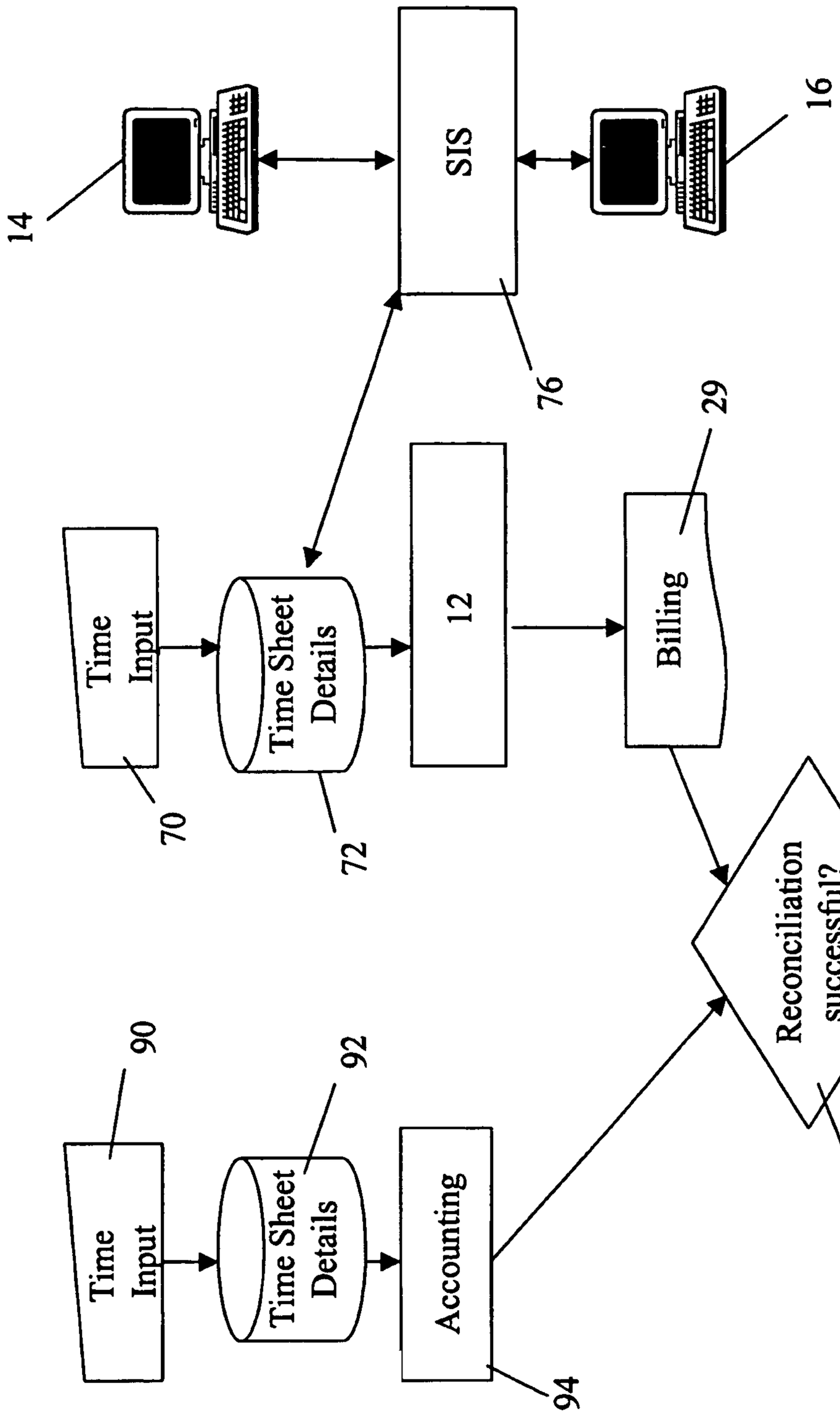

14
SIS
16
76
Time Input
70
Time Sheet Details
72
12
Billing
29
Reconciliation successful?
95
Payment
96
90
Time Input
Time Sheet Details
92
Accounting
94

Fig. 12

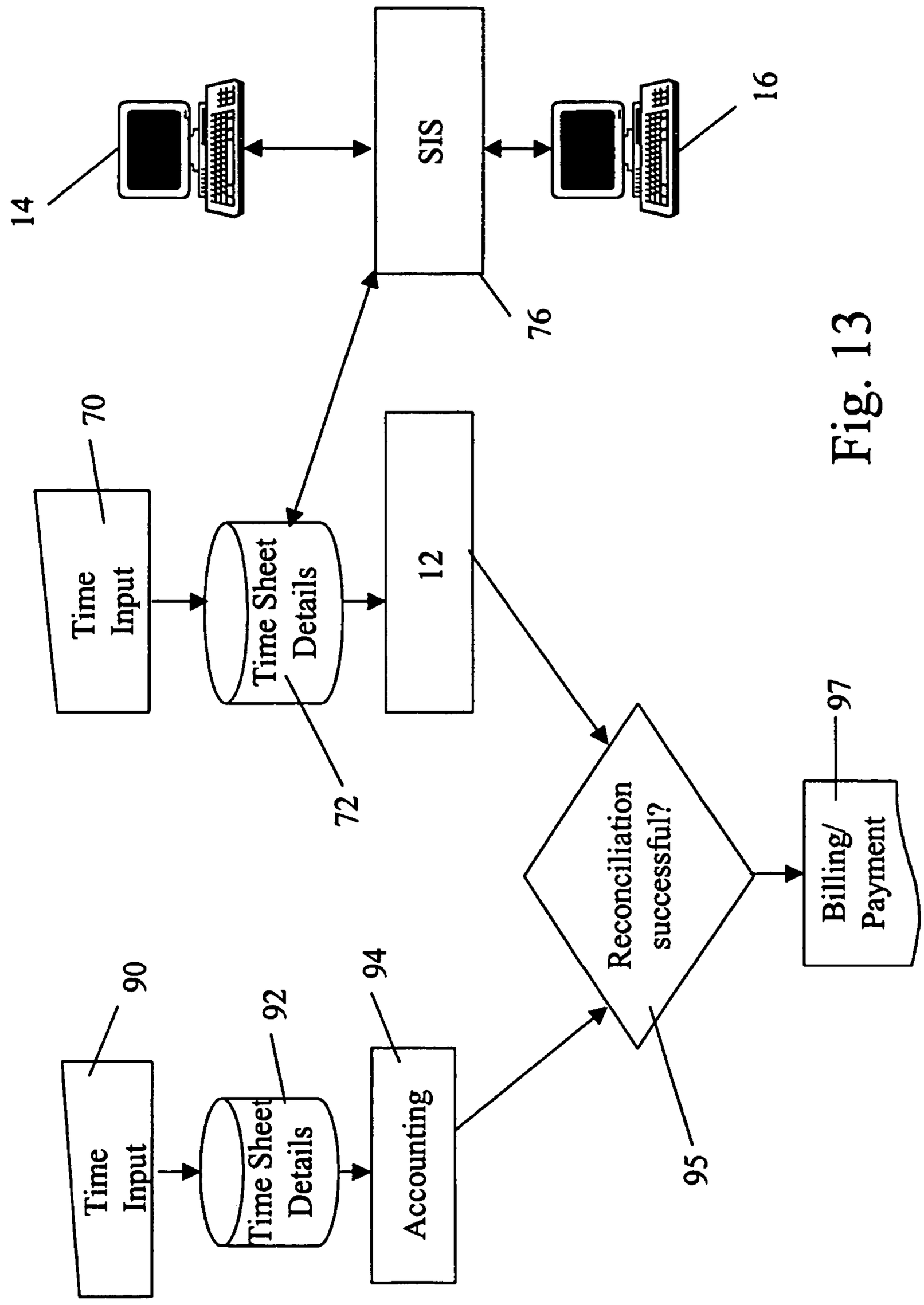

14
SIS
16
76
Time Input
70
Time Sheet Details
72
12
Reconciliation successful?
Billing/ Payment
97
90
Time Input
92
Time Sheet Details
94
Accounting
95

Fig. 13

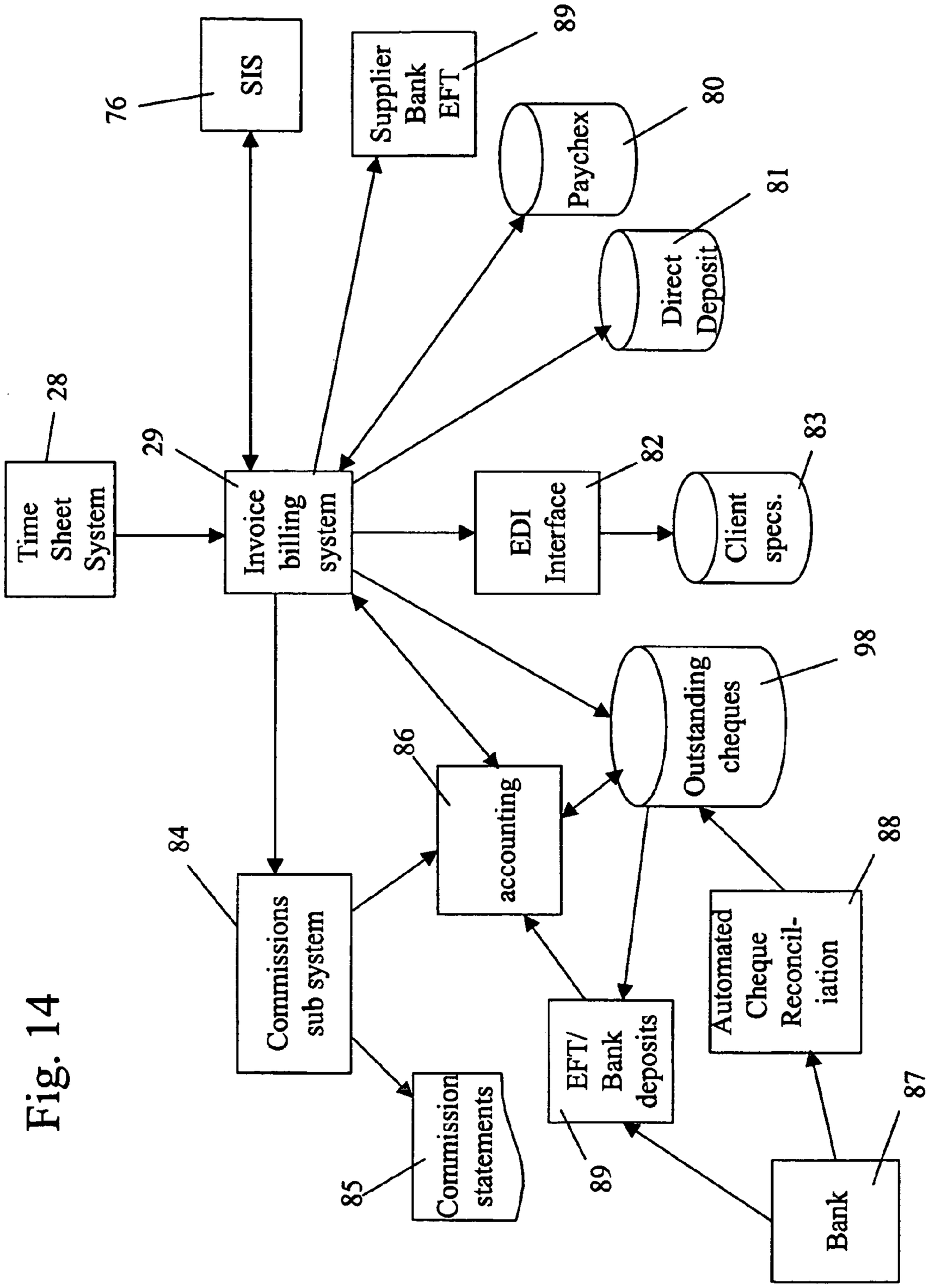

76
SIS
89
Supplier Bank EFT
80
Paychex
81
Direct Deposit
28
Time Sheet System
29
Invoice billing system
82
EDI Interface
83
Client specs.
98
Outstanding cheques
86
accounting
84
Commissions sub system
88
Automated Cheque Reconcil-iation
85
Commission statements
89
EFT/ Bank deposits
87
Bank

Fig. 14

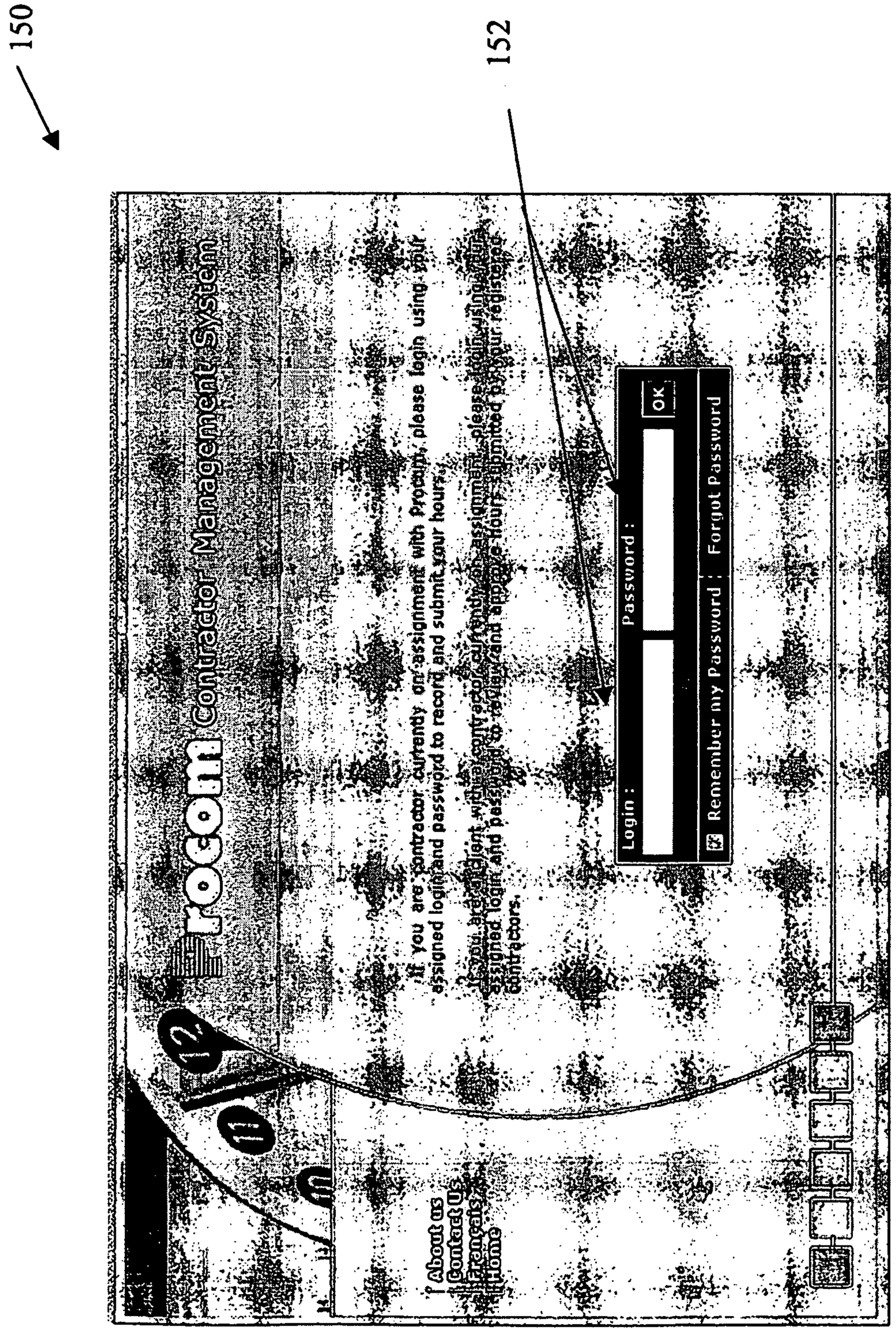

150
152
Contractor Management System
Login :
Password :
OK
Remember my Password
Forgot Password

Fig. 15

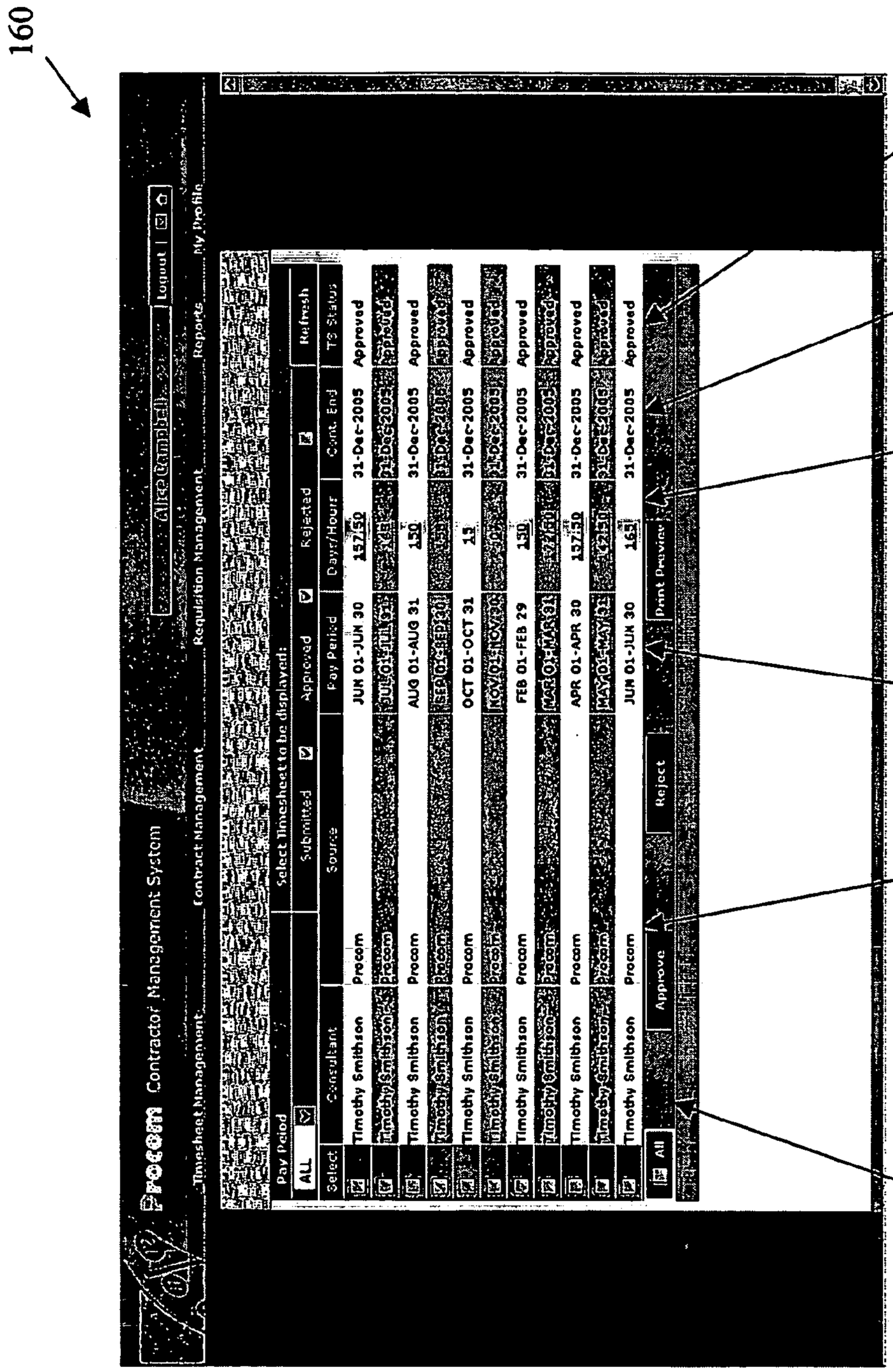

160
168
167
166
165
164
162
Management System
Alice Campbell
Logout
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Timesheet Management
Procom Contractor Management
Select Timesheet to be displayed:
Submitted
Approved
Rejected
Refresh
Pay Period
ALL
Select
Consultant
Source
Pay Period
Days/Hours
Cont. End
TS Status
Timothy Smithson
Procom
JUN 01-JUN 30
157.50
31-Dec-2005
Approved
JUL 01-JUL 31
AUG 01-AUG 31
150
SEP 01-SEP 30
OCT 01-OCT 31
13
NOV 01-NOV 30
DEC 01-DEC 31
JAN 01-JAN 31
FEB 01-FEB 29
MAR 01-MAR 31
77.60
APR 01-APR 30
MAY 01-MAY 31
JUN 01-JUN 30
165
Approve
Reject
Print Preview
All

Fig. 16

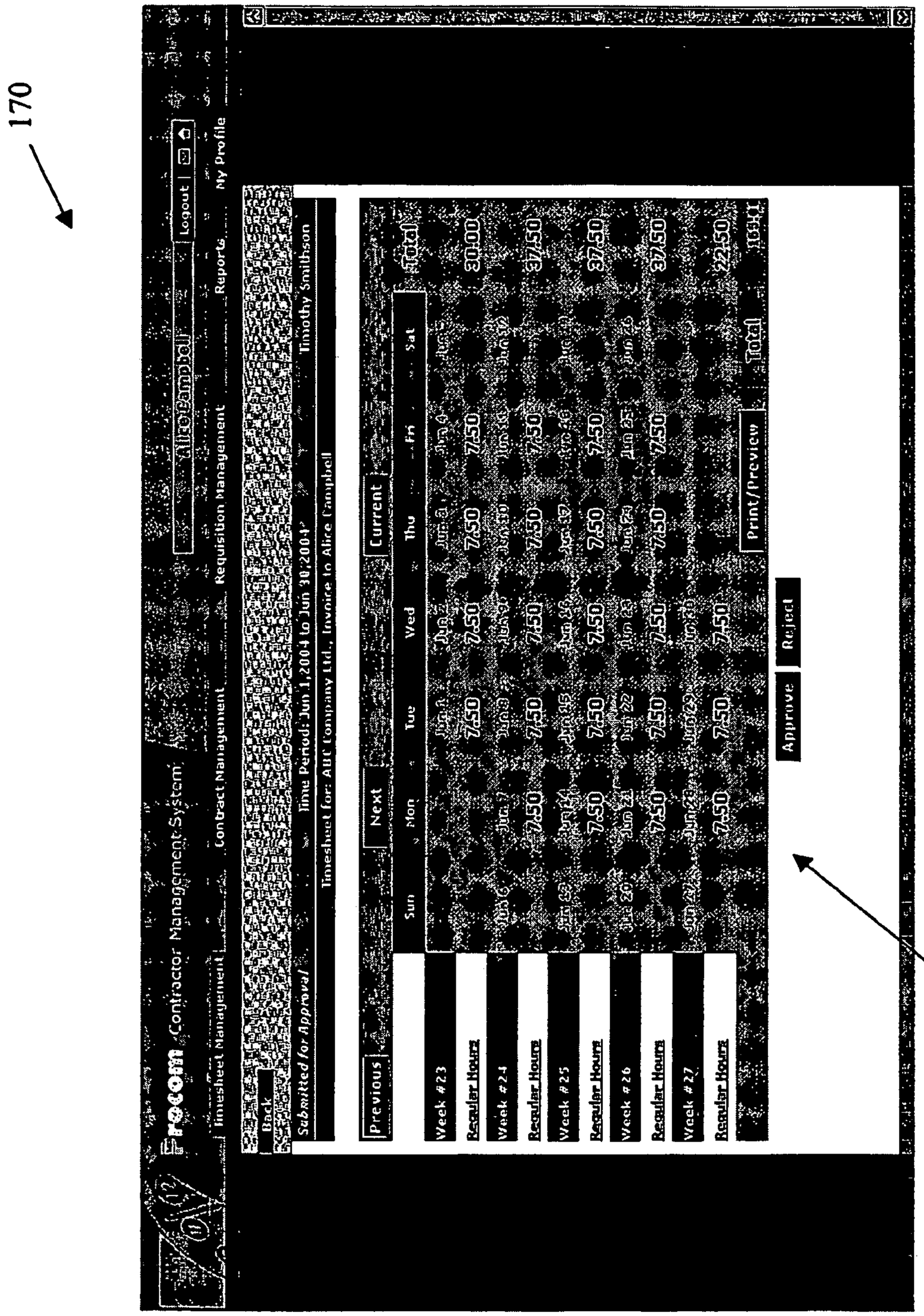

170
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Alice Campbell
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheet for: ABC Company Ltd., Invoice to: Alice Campbell
Next
Current
Previous
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat
Week #23
Regular Hours
Week #24
Regular Hours
Week #25
Regular Hours
Week #26
Regular Hours
Week #27
Regular Hours
Approve
Reject
Print/Preview
Total
172

Fig. 17

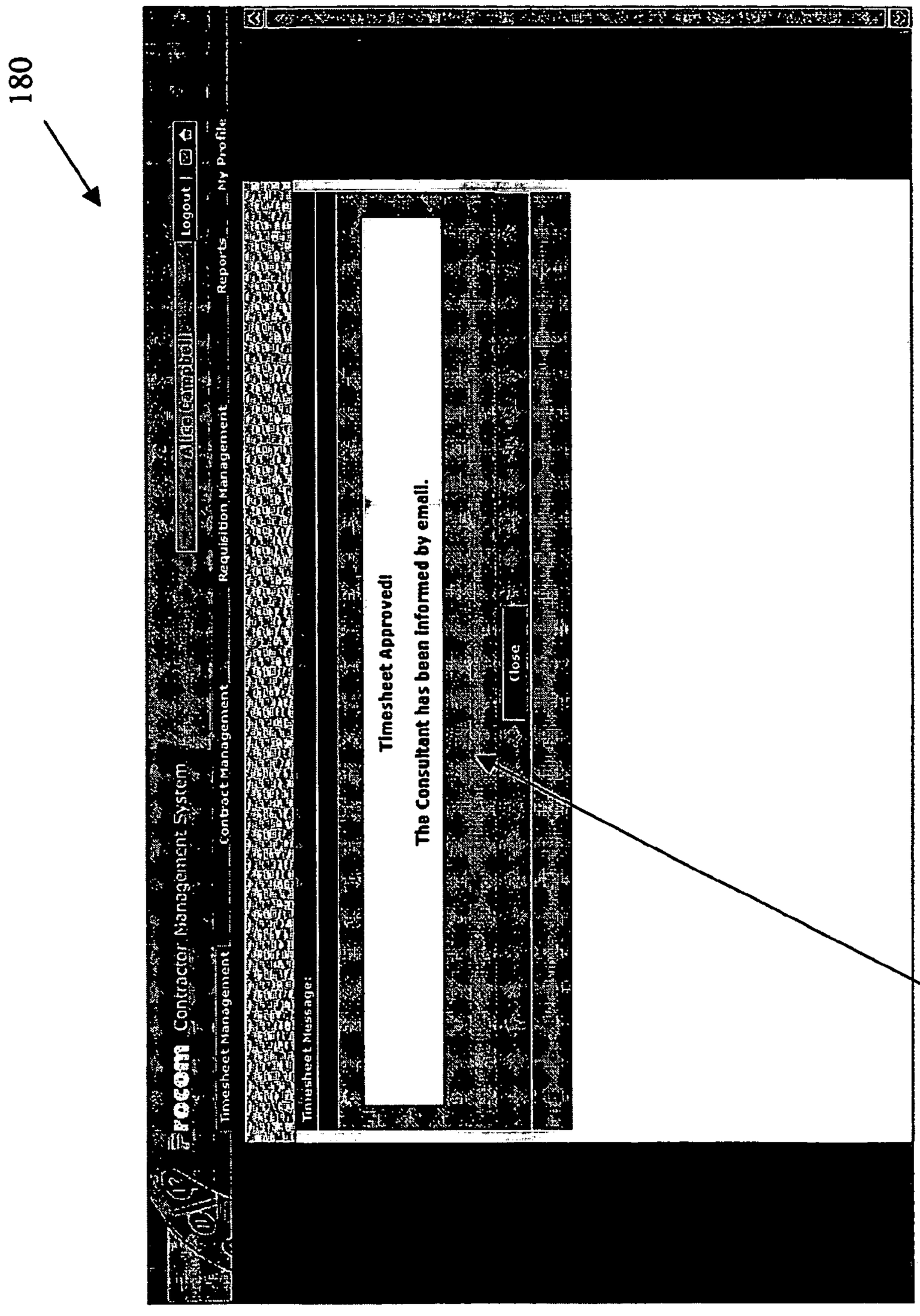

180
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Contractor Management System
Alice Campbell
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheet Management
Timesheet Message:
Timesheet Approved!
The Consultant has been informed by email.
Close
182

Fig. 18

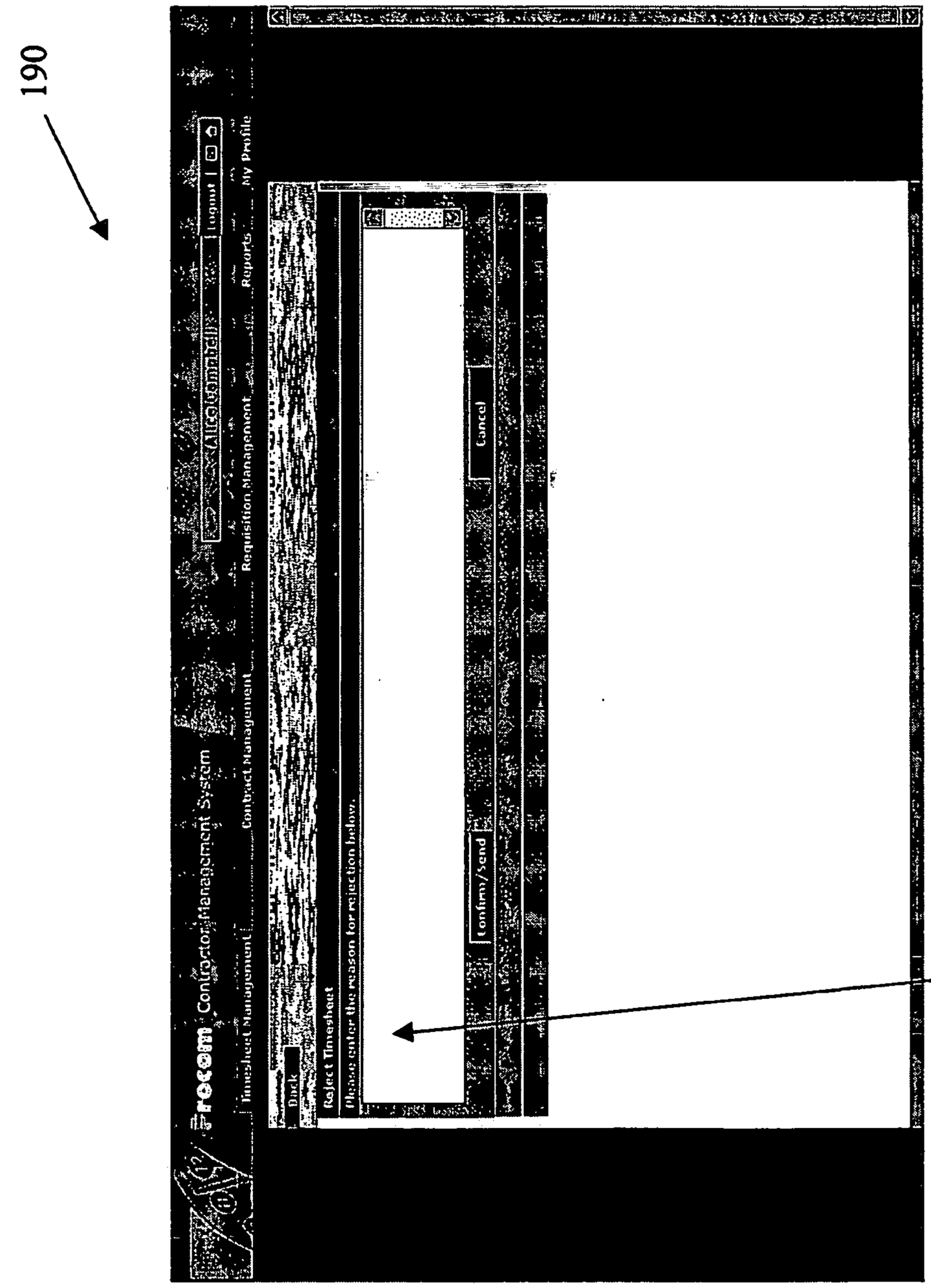

190
192
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Back
Reject Timesheet
Cancel
Confirm/Send

Fig. 19

200

Procom STATEMENT OF WORK COMPLETED TID:103058

TIME PERIOD: **Jun 1, 2003 to Jun 30, 2003** For: **Timothy Smithson**
TIMESHEET FOR CLIENT : ABC Company Ltd.

Timesheet Approved								
	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	WEEKLY TOTAL
Week #23	Jun 1	Jun 2	Jun 3	Jun 4	Jun 5	Jun 6	Jun 7	
Regular Hours		7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50		37.50
Week #24	Jun 8	Jun 9	Jun 10	Jun 11	Jun 12	Jun 13	Jun 14	
Regular Hours		7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50		37.50
Week #25	Jun 15	Jun 16	Jun 17	Jun 18	Jun 19	Jun 20	Jun 21	
Regular Hours		7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50		37.50
Week #26	Jun 22	Jun 23	Jun 24	Jun 25	Jun 26	Jun 27	Jun 28	
Regular Hours		7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50	7.50		37.50
Week #27	Jun 29	Jun 30						
Regular Hours		7.50						7.50
							Total	157.50

CONSULTANT SIGNATURE: _____

"AS THE AUTHORIZED CLIENT REPRESENTATIVE, I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE ABOVE MENTIONED CONSULTANT HAS WORKED THE NUMBER OF HOURS INDICATED, THAT I HAVE VERIFIED THE WORK AND THAT I AM SATISFIED WITH THE QUALITY THEREOF. EN TANT QUE REPRÉSENTANT AUTORISÉ DU CLIENT, JE RECONNAIS PAR CECI QUE LE CONSEILLER MENTIONNÉ CI-DESSUS A TRAVAILLÉ LE NOMBRE D'HEURES INDIQUÉES, QUE J'AI VÉRIFIÉ LE TRAVAIL ET QUE J'EN SUIS SATISFAIT DE LA QUALITÉ.

CLIENT SIGNATURE: Approved Online On Mar 23, 2004 04:28 PM by Alice Campbell

PLEASE FAX YOUR SIGNED TIMESHEET TO:

Fig. 20

Fig. 21

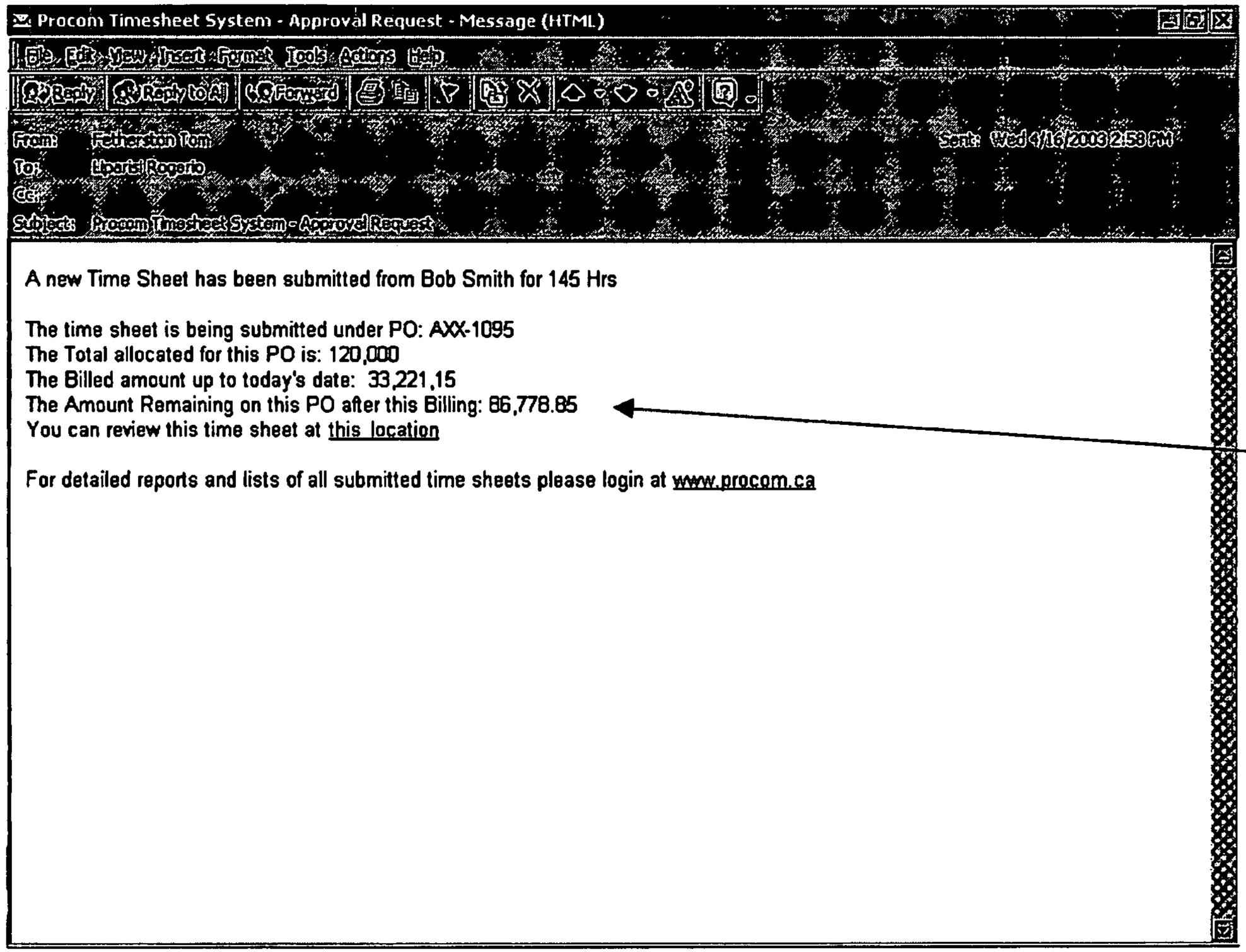

Procom Timesheet System - Approval Request - Message (HTML)
File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help
Reply
Reply to All
Forward
From: Fetherston Tom
To: Liparisi Rogerio
Cc:
Subject: Procom Timesheet System - Approval Request
Sent: Wed 4/16/2003 2:58 PM
A new Time Sheet has been submitted from Bob Smith for 145 Hrs
The time sheet is being submitted under PO: AXX-1095
The Total allocated for this PO is: 120,000
The Billed amount up to today's date: 33,221,15
The Amount Remaining on this PO after this Billing: 86,778.85
You can review this time sheet at this location
For detailed reports and lists of all submitted time sheets please login at www.procom.ca
210
212

Fig. 22

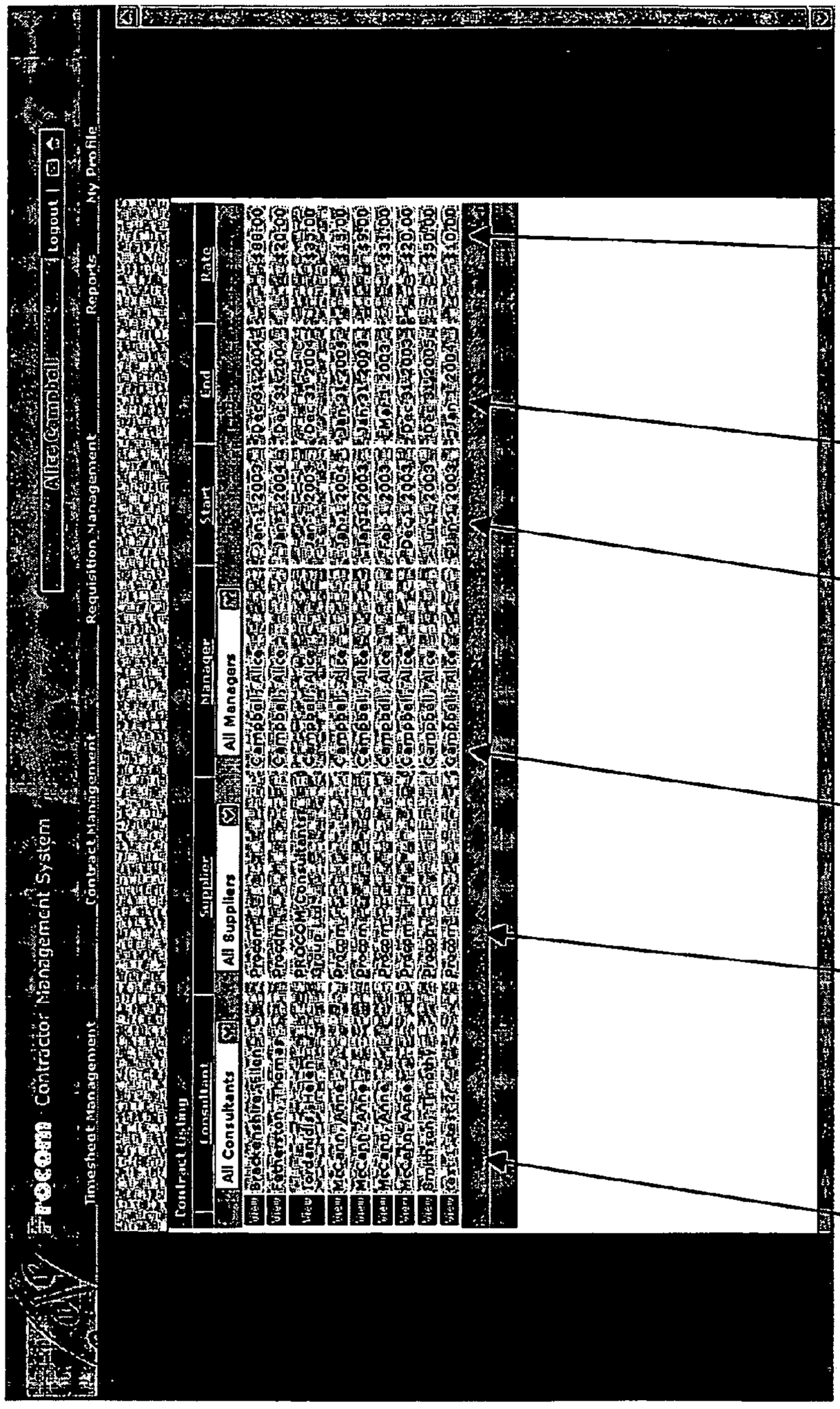

220
221
222
223
224
225
226
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Logout
Contract Listing
Consultant
All Consultants
Supplier
All Suppliers
Manager
All Managers
Start
End
Rate

Fig. 23

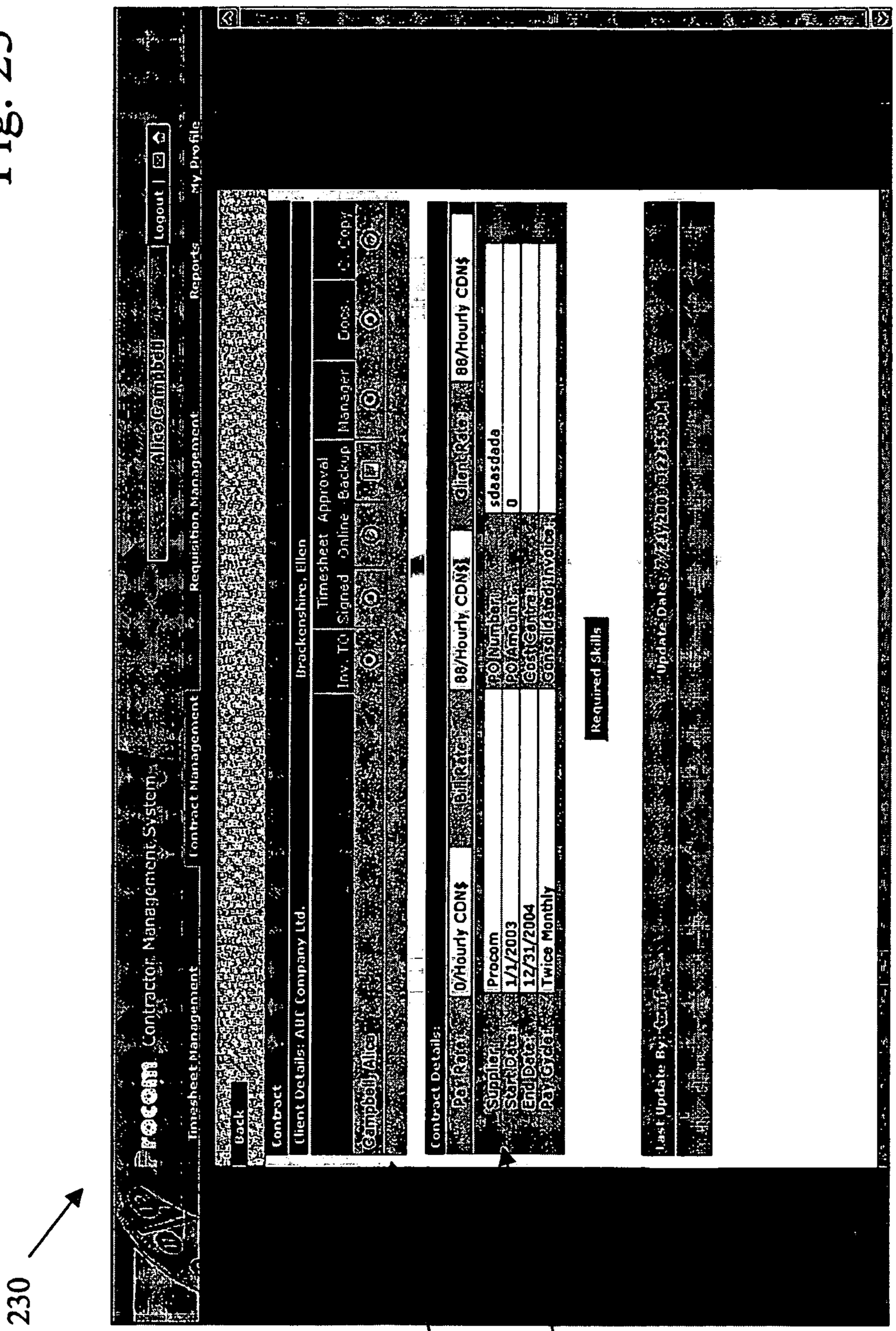

230
234
232
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Logout
My Profile
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Back
Contract
Client Details: ABC Company Ltd.
Campbell, Alice
Brackenshire, Ellen
Inv. TC
Signed
Timesheet Approval
Online
Backup
Manager
Copy
Contract Details:
Per Rate
88/Hourly, CDN$
Client Rate
88/Hourly CDN$
0/Hourly CDN$
Supplier
Procom
Start Date
1/1/2003
End Date
12/31/2004
Pay Cycle
Twice Monthly
PO Number
sdaasdada
PO Amount
0
Cost Centre
Consolidated Invoice
Required Skills
Last Update By:
Update Date: 7/21/2004 8:05:54 PM

Fig. 24

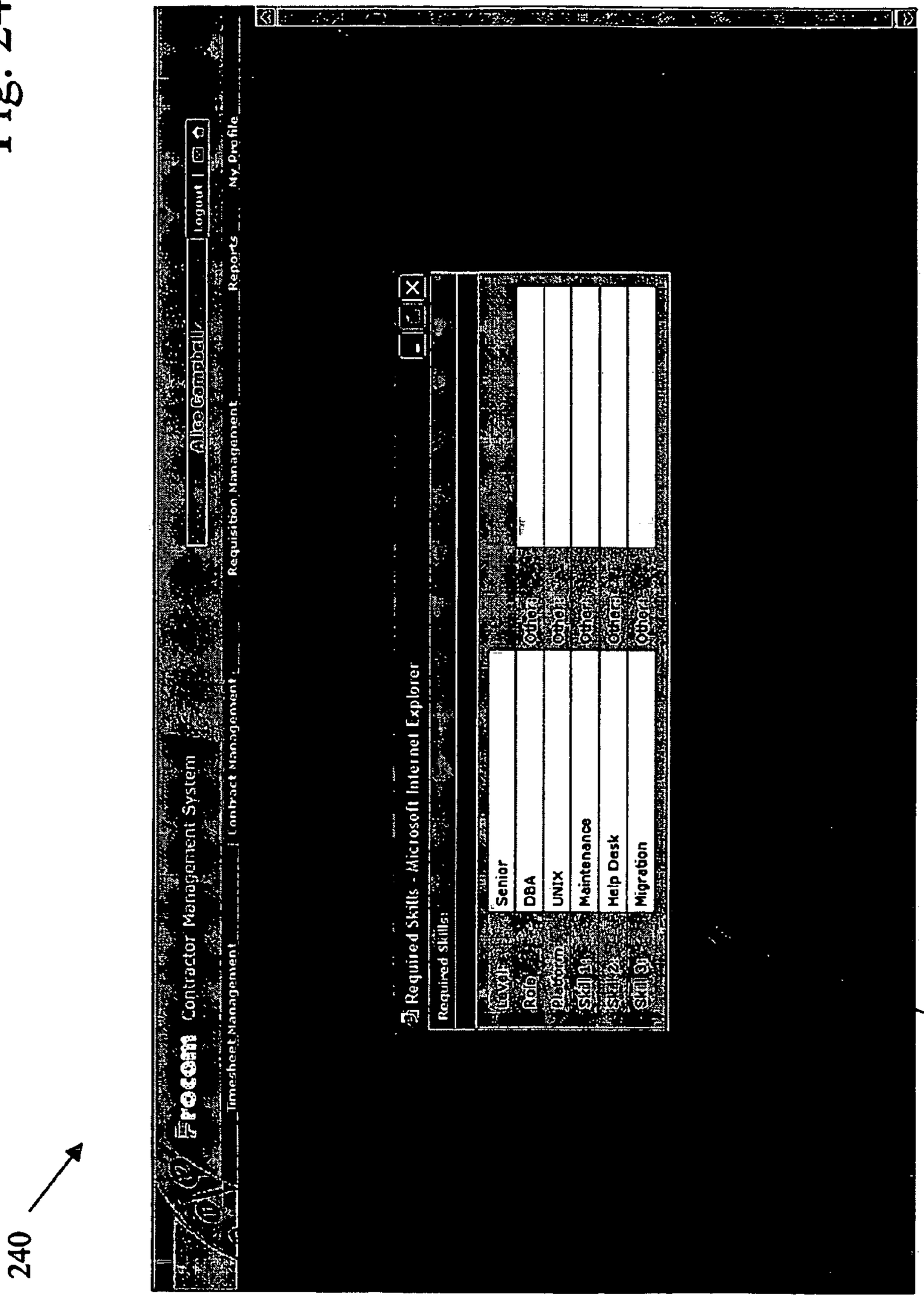

Management System
Logout
My_Profile
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alae Combalir
Required Skills - Microsoft Internet Explorer
Procom Contractor Management
Timesheet Management
Required Skills:
Level
Role
Platform
Skill 3
Skill 2
Skill 1
Senior
DBA
UNIX
Maintenance
Help Desk
Migration
Other
Other
Other
Other
Other
Other
240
242

Fig. 25

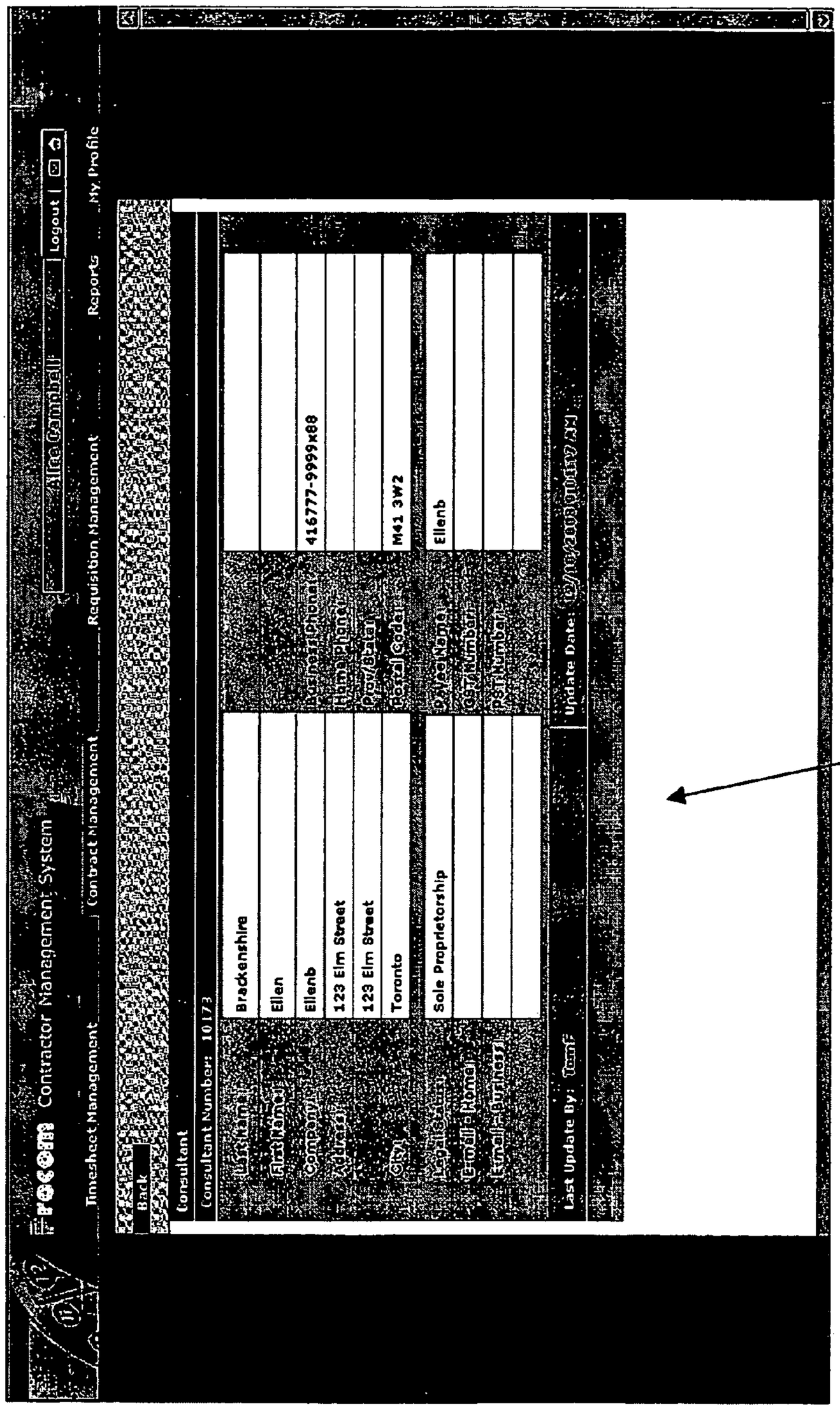

250
252
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Logout
My Profile
Back
Consultant
Consultant Number: 10173
Update Date:
Last Update By: Tomf
Brackenshire
Ellen
Ellenb
123 Elm Street
123 Elm Street
Toronto
Sole Proprietorship
416777-9999x88
M4I 3W2
Ellenb

Fig. 26

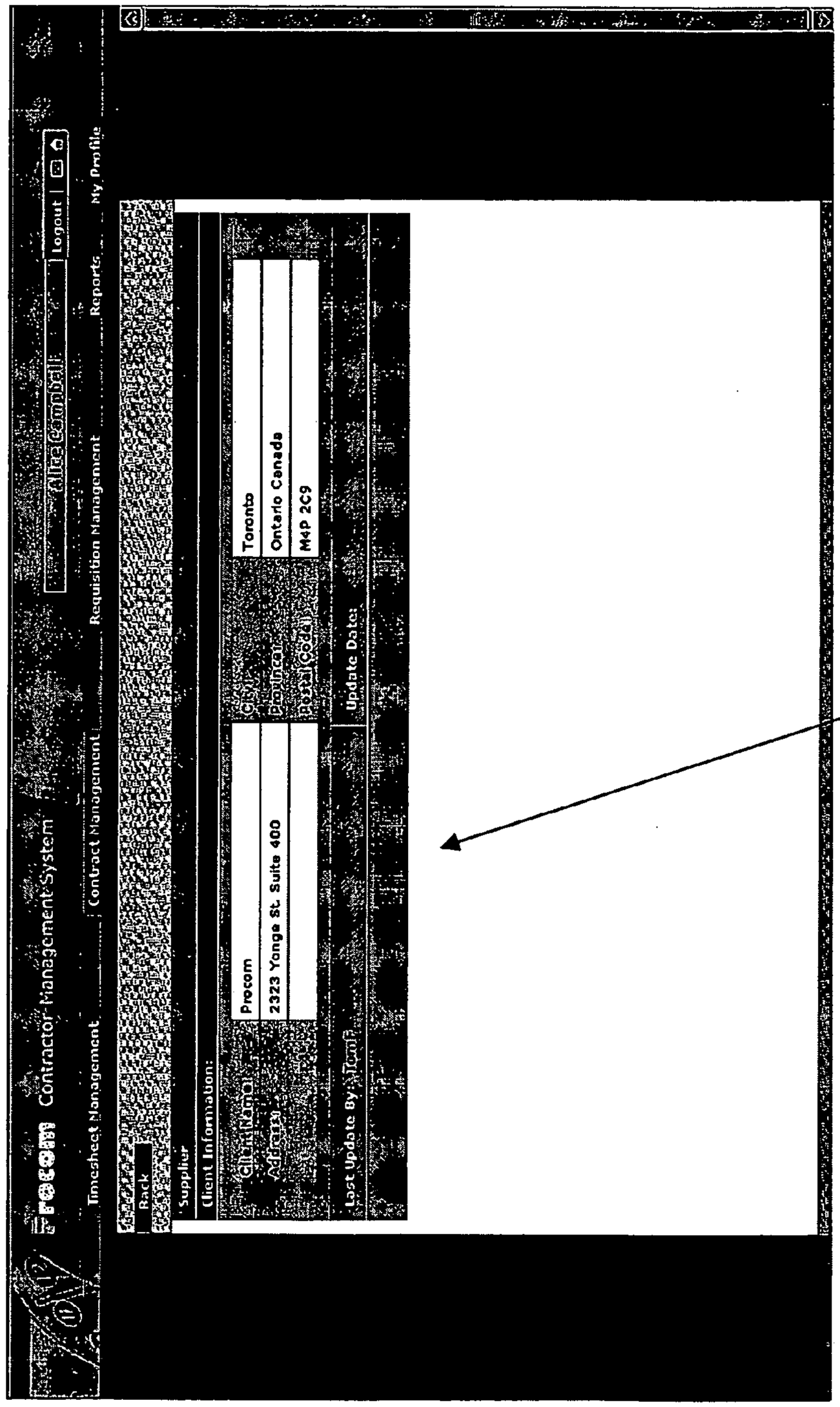

260
262
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Back
Supplier
Client Information:
Client Name
Address
Last Update By:
Procom
2323 Yonge St Suite 400
City:
Toronto
Province:
Ontario Canada
Postal Code:
M4P 2C9
Update Date:

Fig. 27

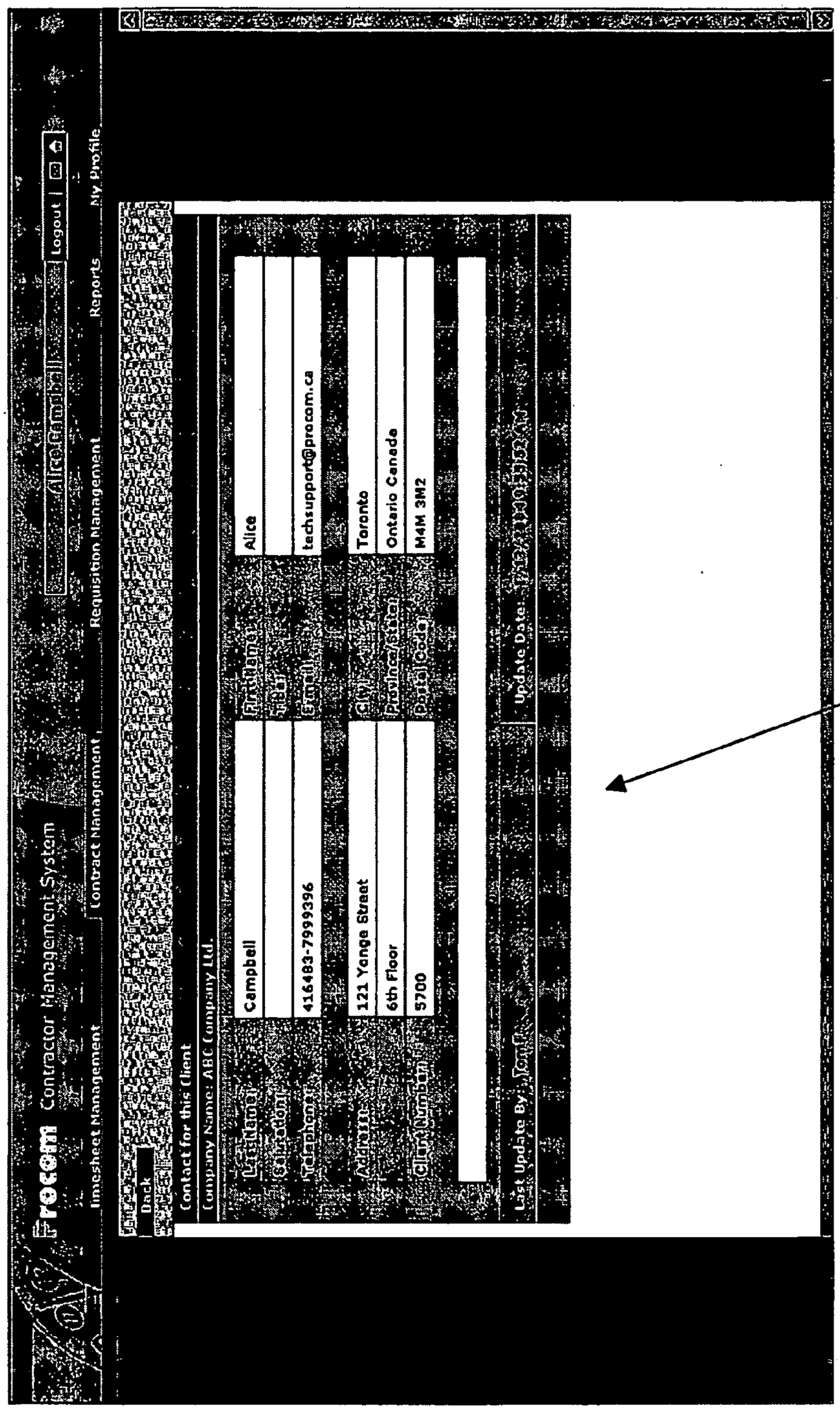

Logout
My Profile
Reports
AliceCampbell
Requisition Management
Contract Management
Timesheet Management System
Frocom Contractor Management
Timesheet Management
Back
Contact for this Client
Company Name: ABC Company Ltd.
Campbell
416483-7999396
121 Yonge Street
6th Floor
5700
Alice
tachsupport@procom.ca
Toronto
Ontario Canada
M4M 3M2
Update Date:
Last Update By:
270
272

Fig. 28

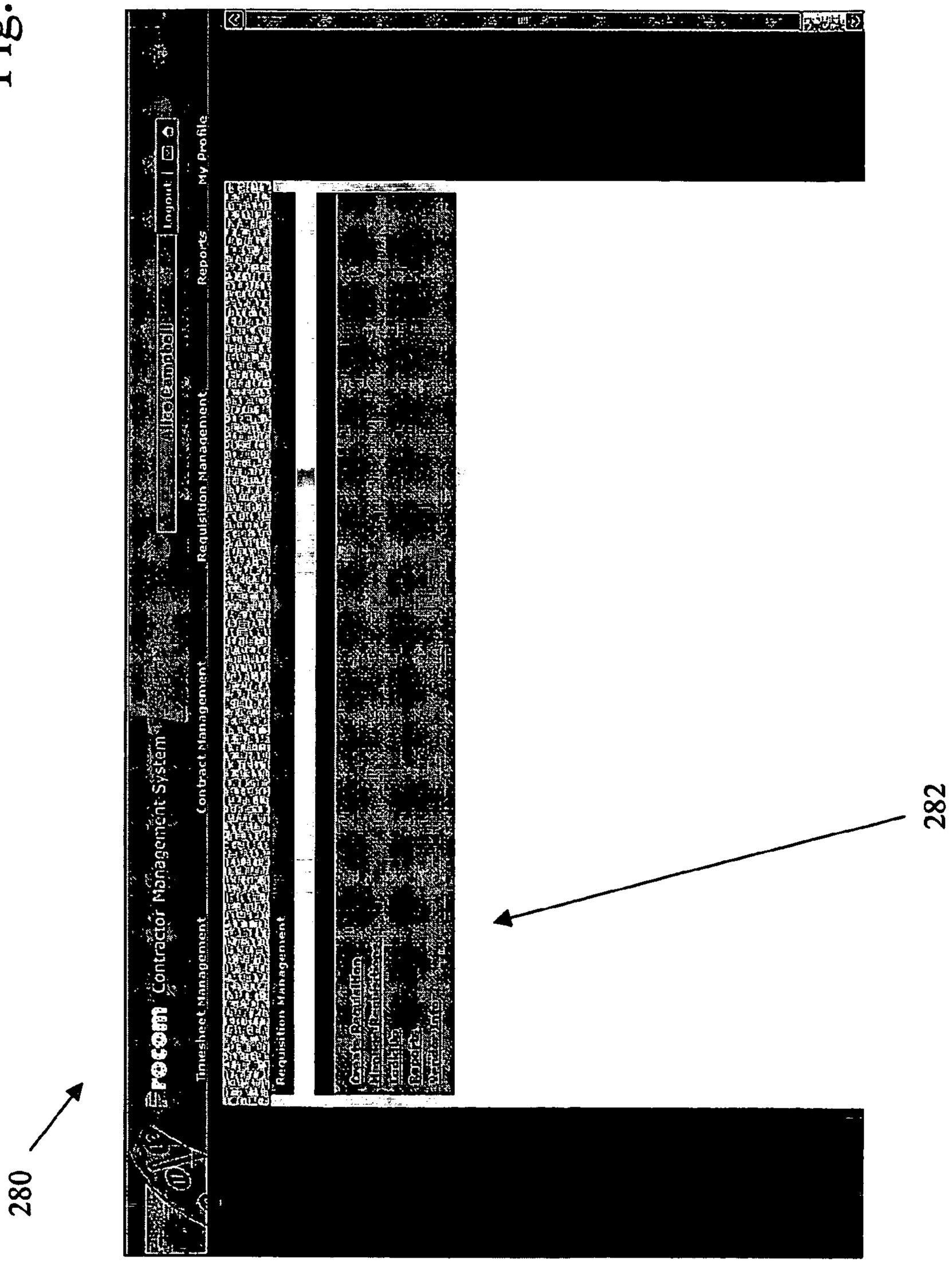

280
282
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Requisition Management
Contract Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Logout
My Profile
Create Requisition
Manage Requisitions
Tasks
Reports
Print Info

Fig. 29

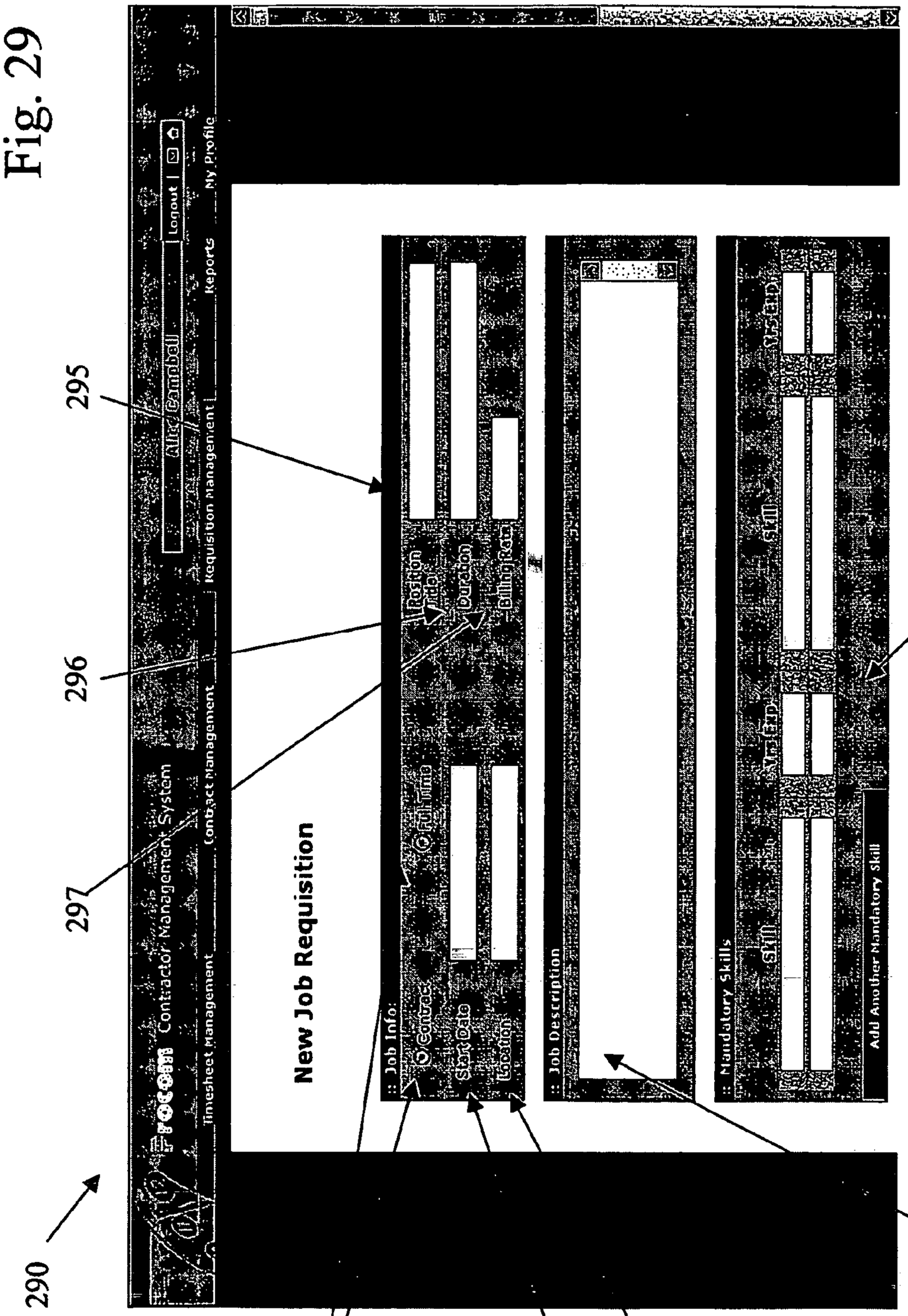

290
292
293
294
295
296
297
298
299
New Job Requisition
Contract Management
Timesheet Management
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Alice Camball
Job Info:
Job Description
Mandatory Skills
Add Another Mandatory Skill
Full Time
Position Title
Duration
Billing Rate
Start Date
Location
Min Exp
Skill

Fig. 30

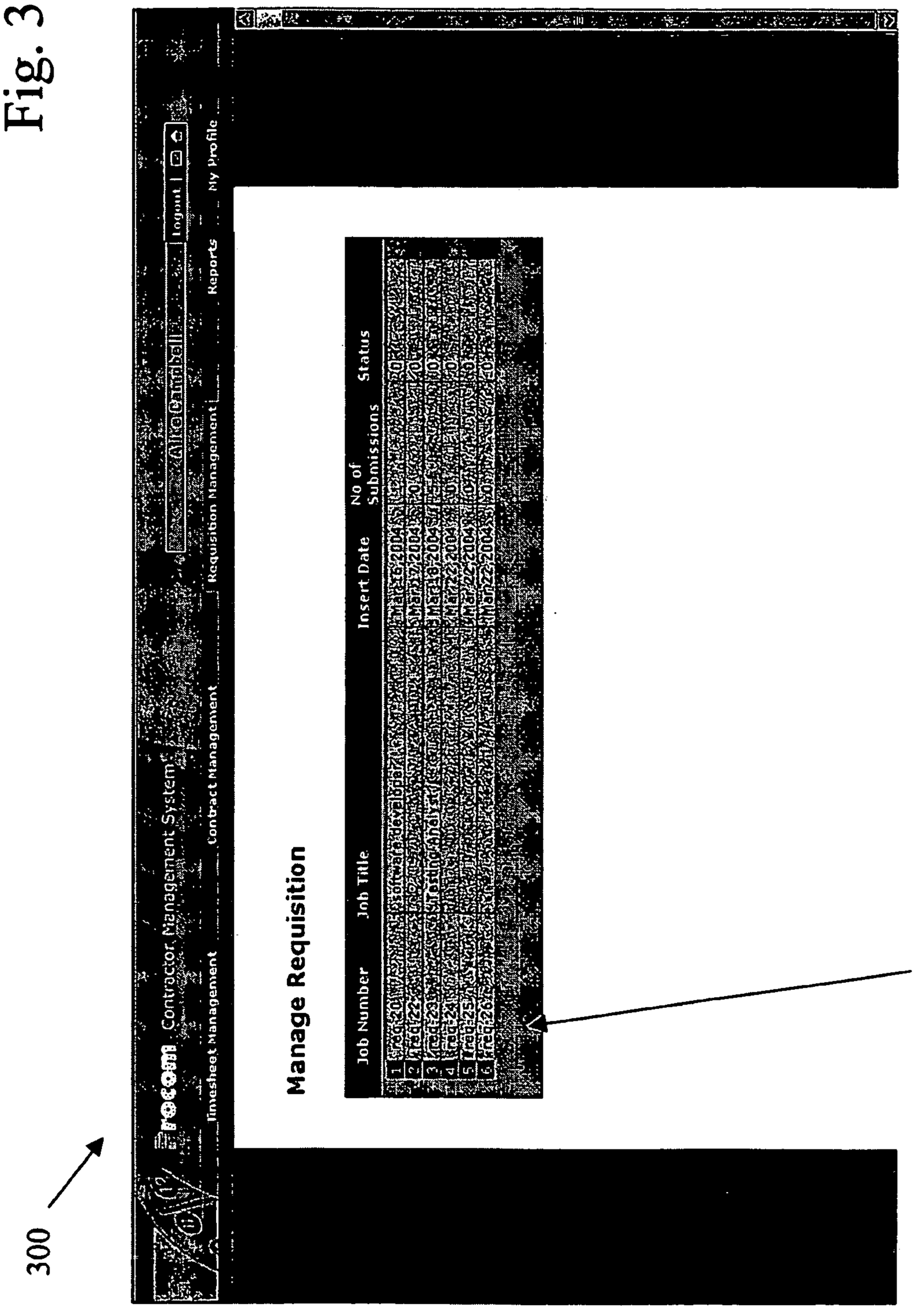
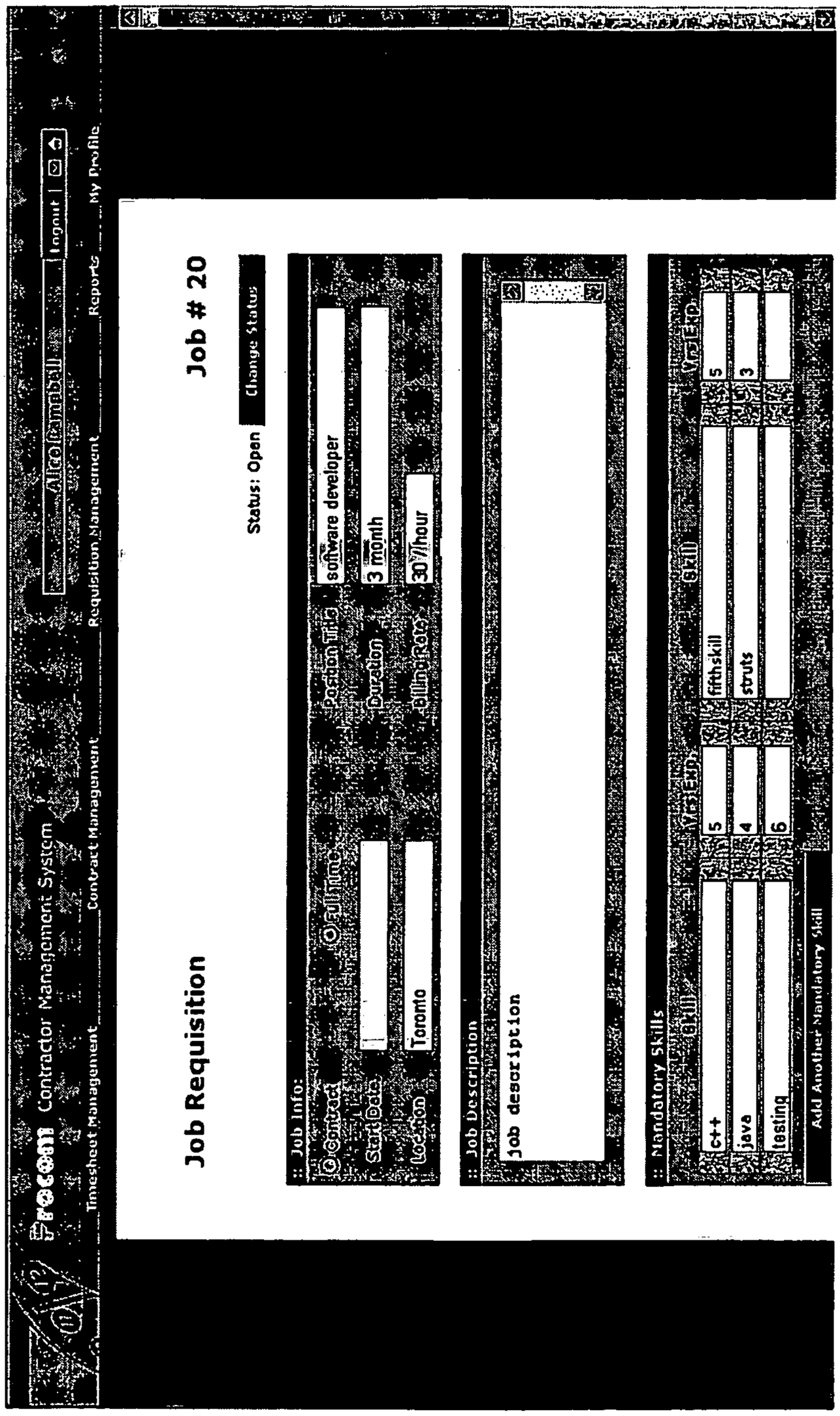
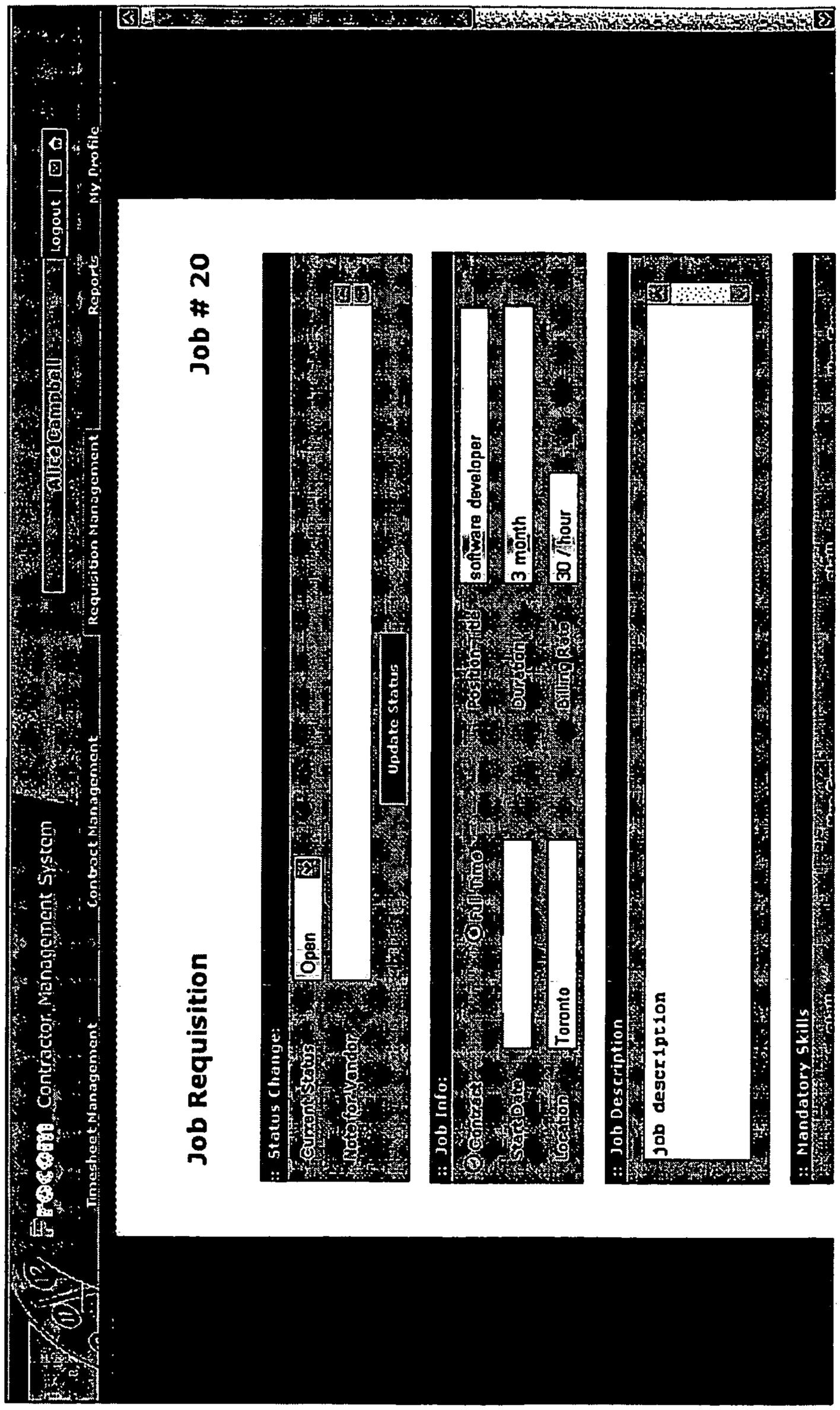

Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Logout
My Profile
300
Manage Requisition
Job Number
Job Title
Insert Date
No of Submissions
Status
302

Fig. 31


Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Logout
Job Requisition
Job # 20
Status: Open
Change Status
:: Job Info:
Contract
Full Time
Position Title
software developer
Duration
3 month
Billing Rate
30 /hour
Start Date
Location
Toronto
:: Job Description
Job description
:: Mandatory Skills
Skill
Yrs Exp.
5
fifthskill
4
struts
6
c++
java
testing
Add Another Mandatory Skill

310

Fig. 32


Logout
My Profile
Alice Campbell
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Update Status
Job # 20
Position title
software developer
Duration
3 month
Billing Rate
30 /hour
Job Requisition
:: Status Change:
Current Status
Open
Note for Vendor
:: Job Info:
Contract
Start Date
Location
Toronto
:: Job Description
Job description
:: Mandatory Skills

320

Fig. 33

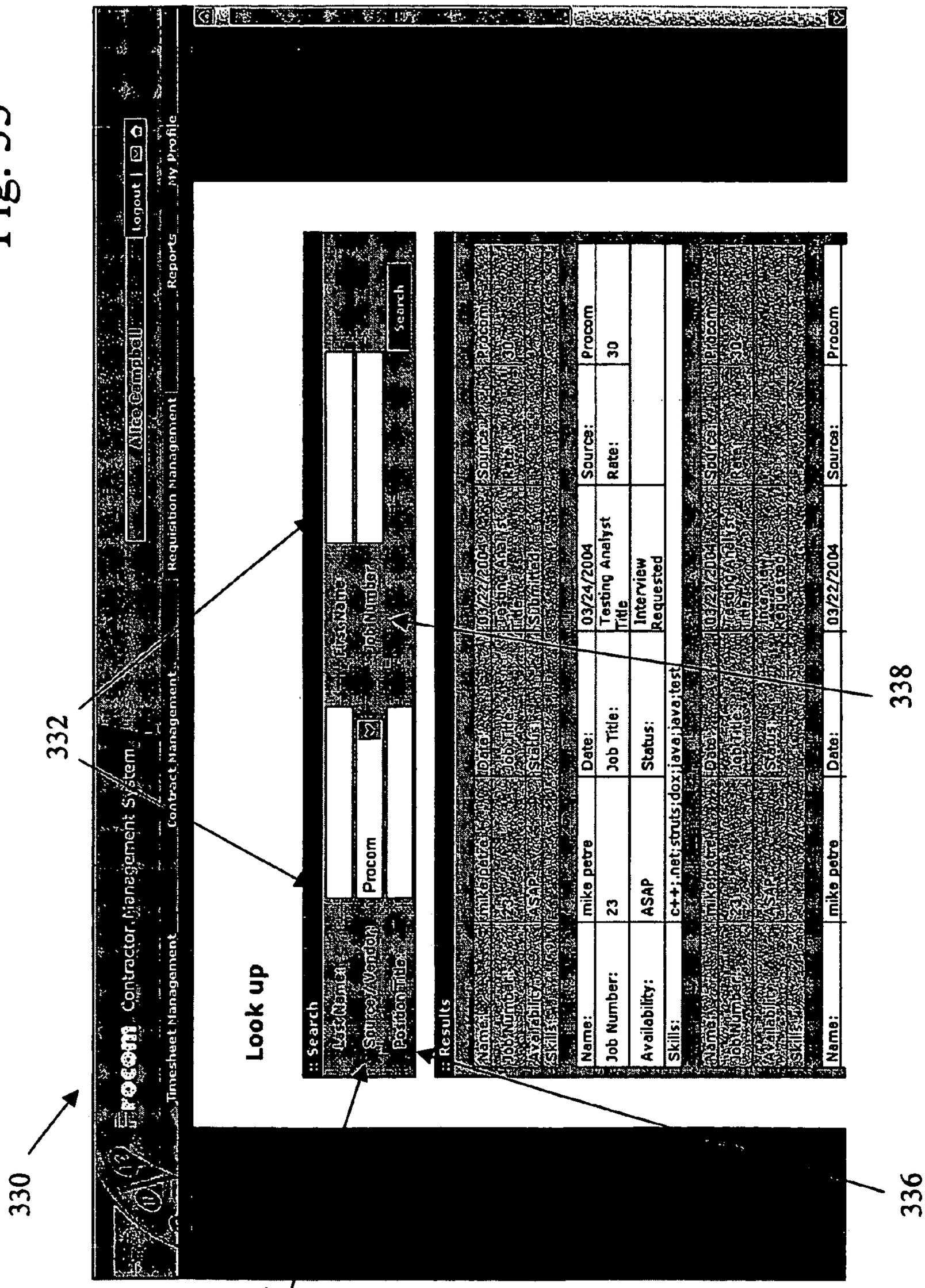

330
332
334
336
338
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Alice Campbell
Logout
My Profile
Look up
:: Search
Last Name
Source/Vendor
Position title
Search
:: Results
Name:
Job Number:
Availability:
Skills:
Date:
Job Title:
Status:
Source:
Rate:
mike petre
23
ASAP
03/24/2004
Testing Analyst
Interview Requested
30
Procom
c++;.net;struts;dox;java;java;test

Fig. 34

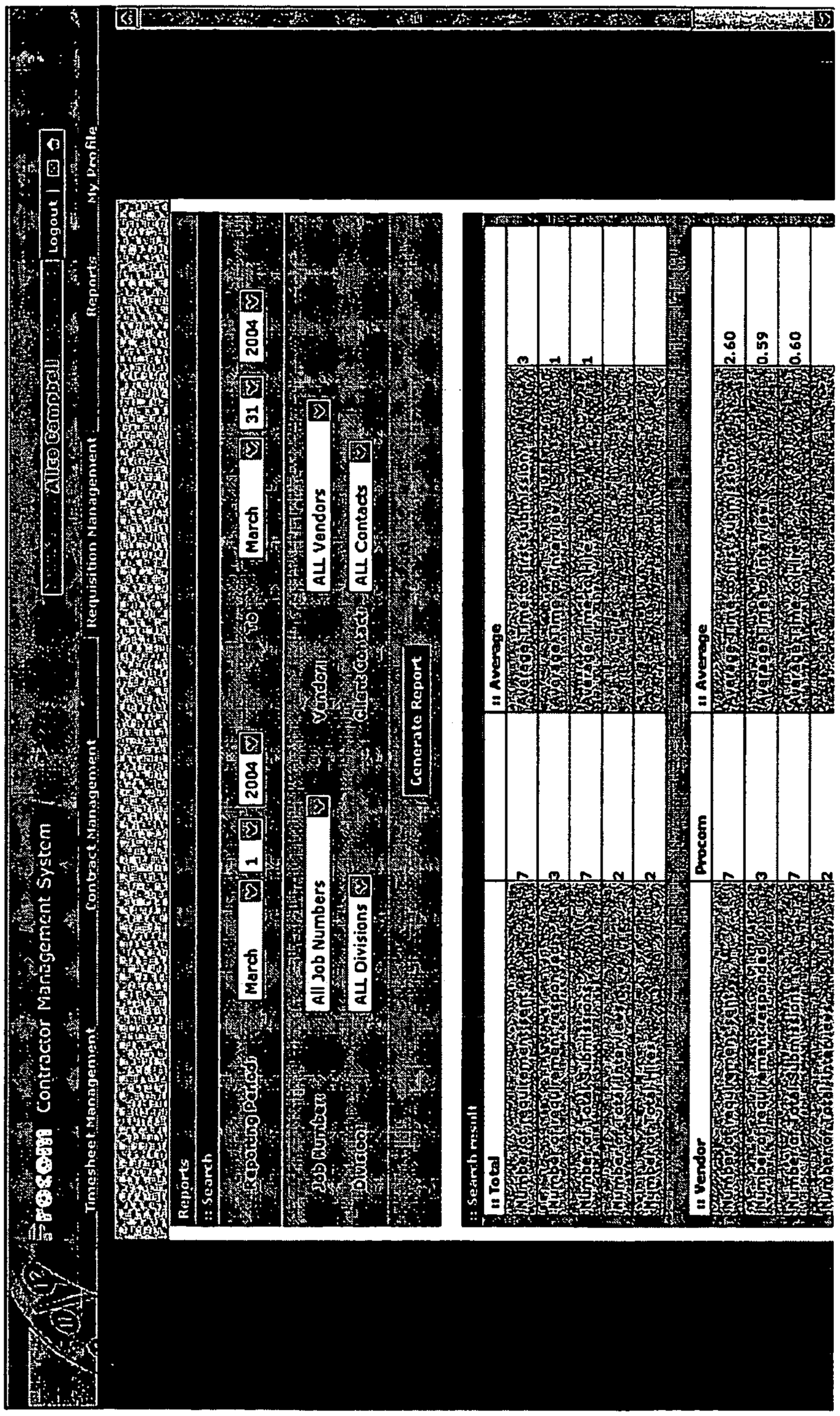

Logout
My Profile
Alice Campbell
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
March
1
2004
To
March
31
2004
All Job Numbers
All Vendors
ALL Divisions
ALL Contacts
Vendor
Client Contact
Generate Report
:: Average
Procom
:: Search result
:: Total
:: Vendor
340

Fig. 35

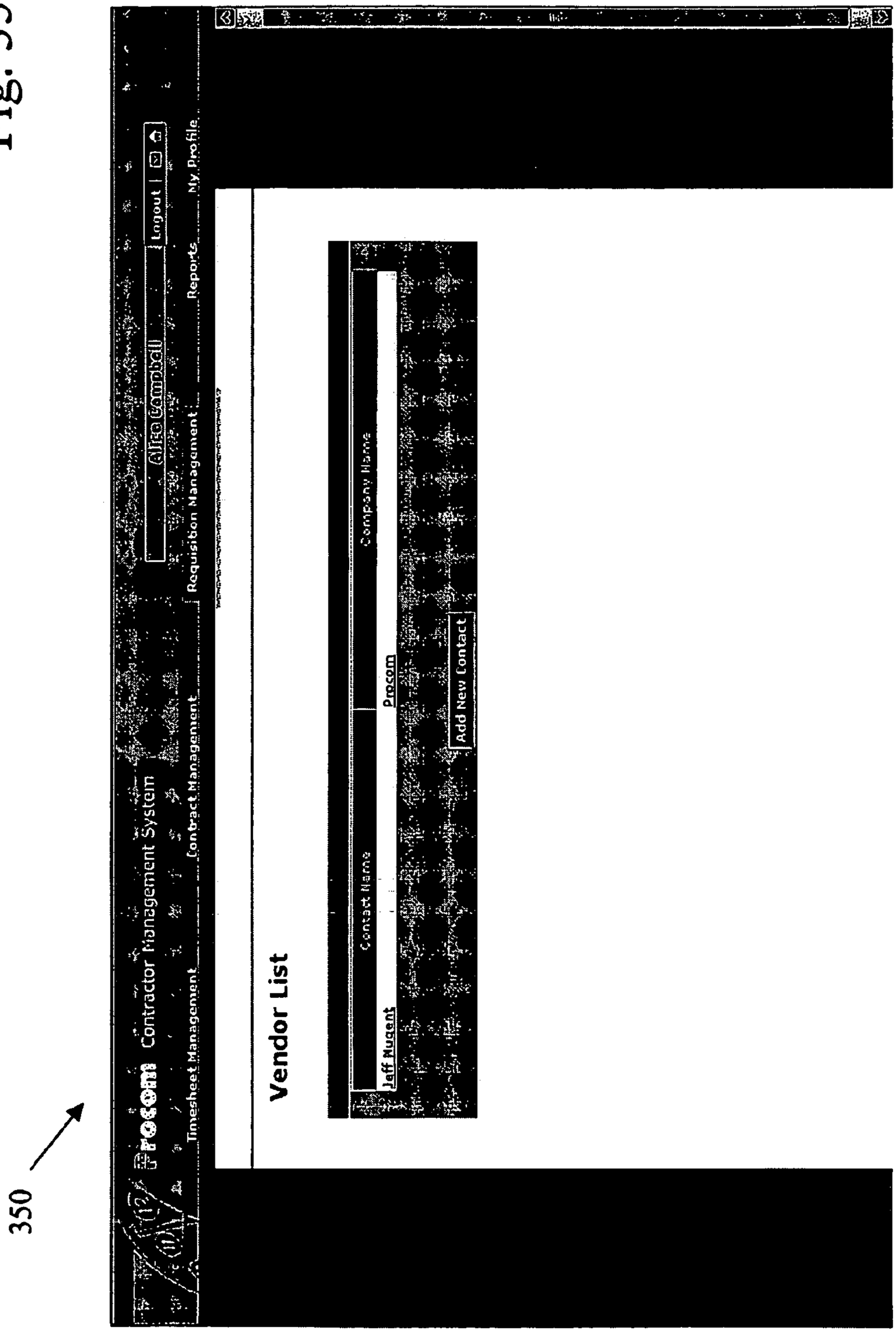

350
Contractor Management System
Logout
My Profile
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Timesheet Management
Vendor List
Company Name
Add New Contact
Jeff Nugent

Fig. 36

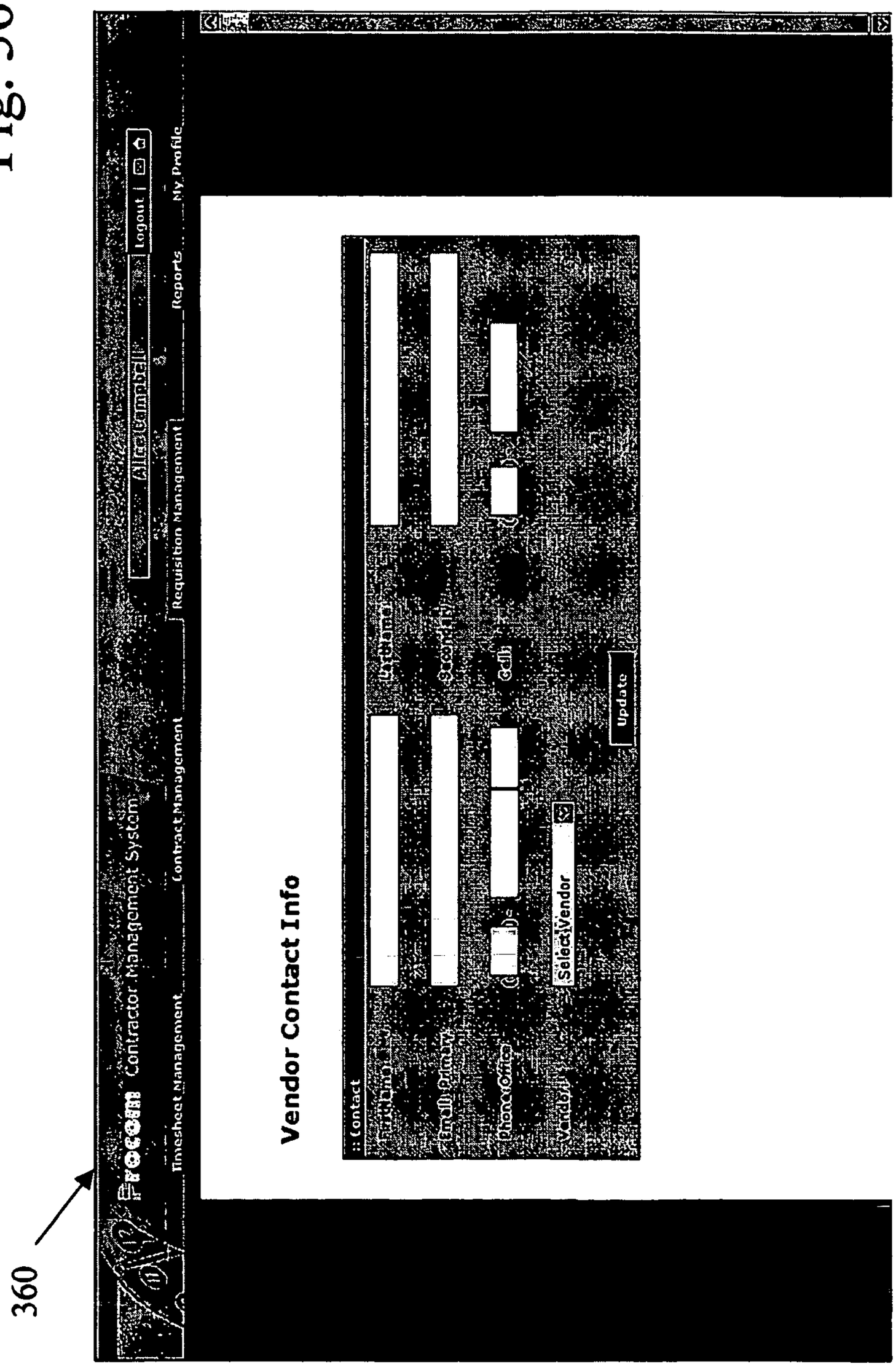
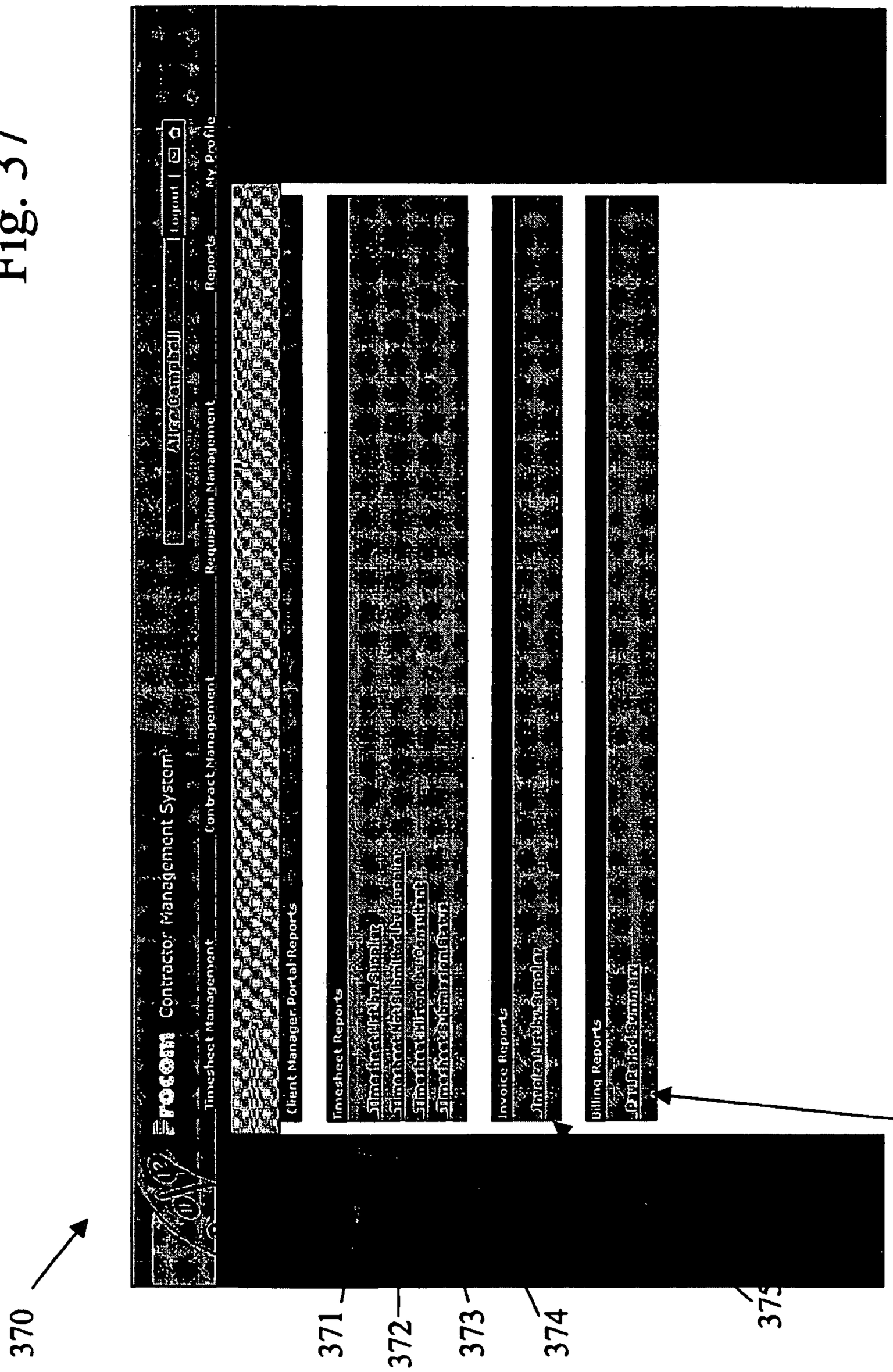

Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Logout
My Profile
Vendor Contact Info
:: Contact
Update
360

Fig. 37


370
371
372
373
374
375
376
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Client Manager Portal Reports
Logout
My Profile
Alice.Campbell
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheet Reports
Invoice Reports
Billing Reports

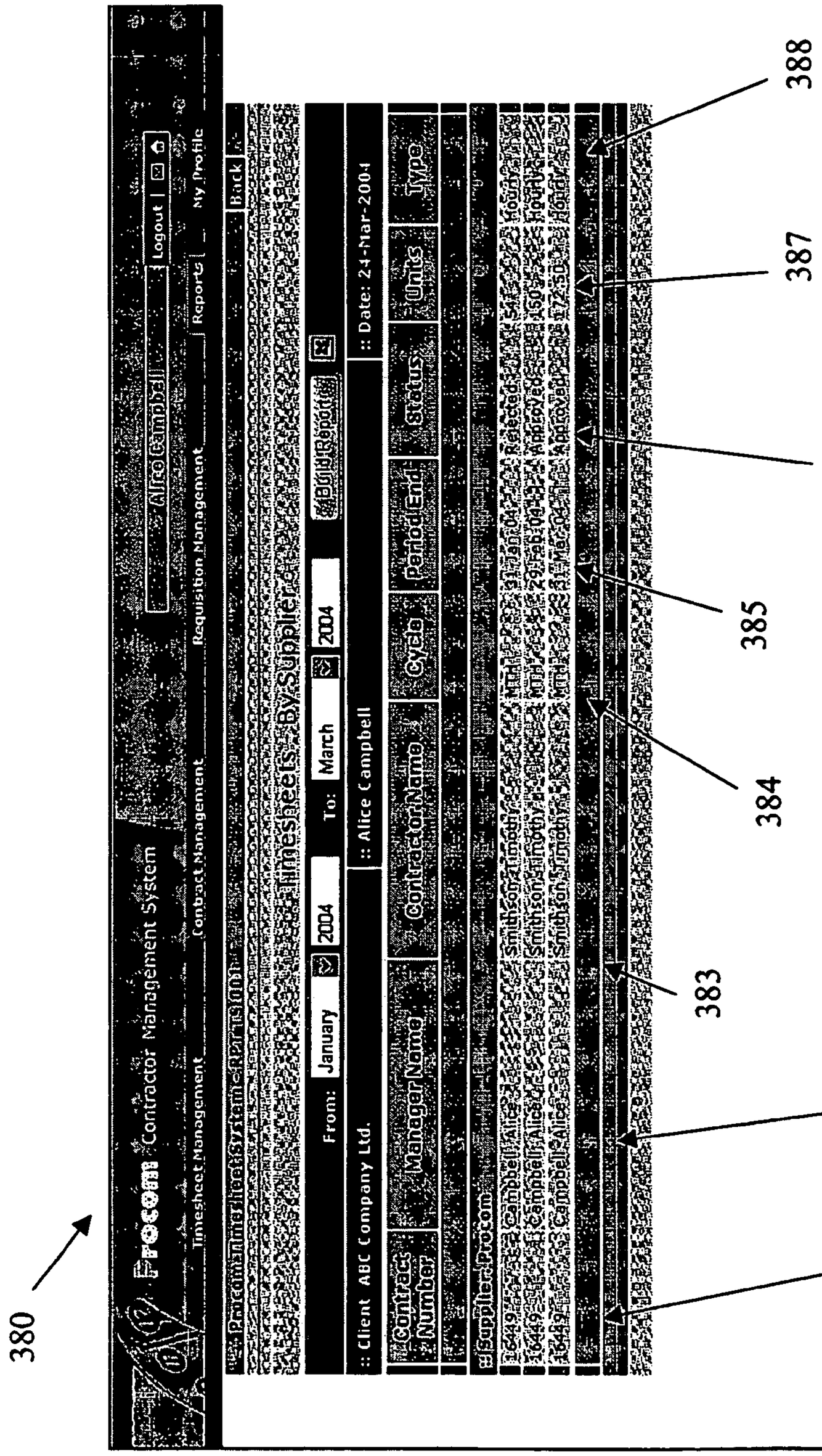

380
381
382
383
384
385
386
387
388
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Alice Campbell
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheets By Supplier
From: January
To: March
2004
:: Client ABC Company Ltd.
:: Alice Campbell
Contract Number
Manager Name
Cycle
Period End
Status
Supplier.Procom

Fig. 38

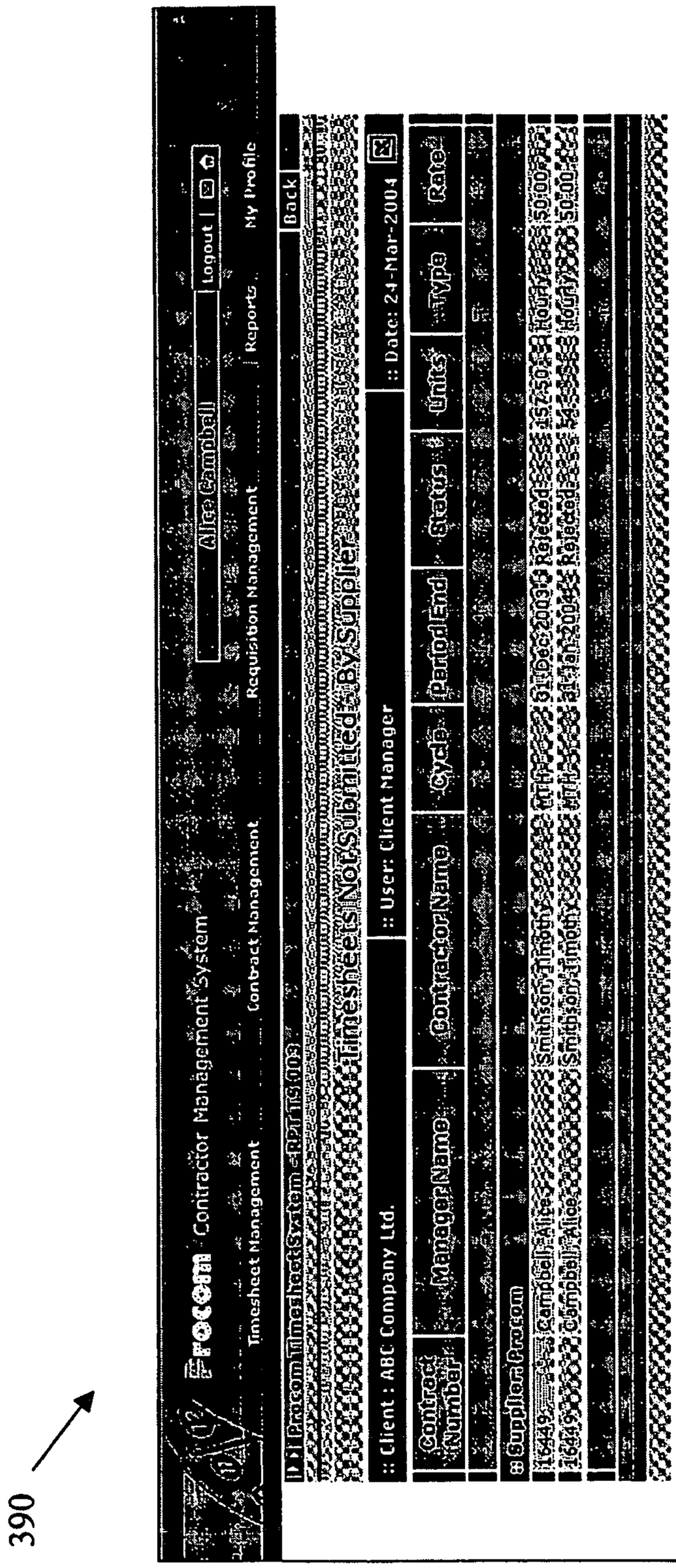
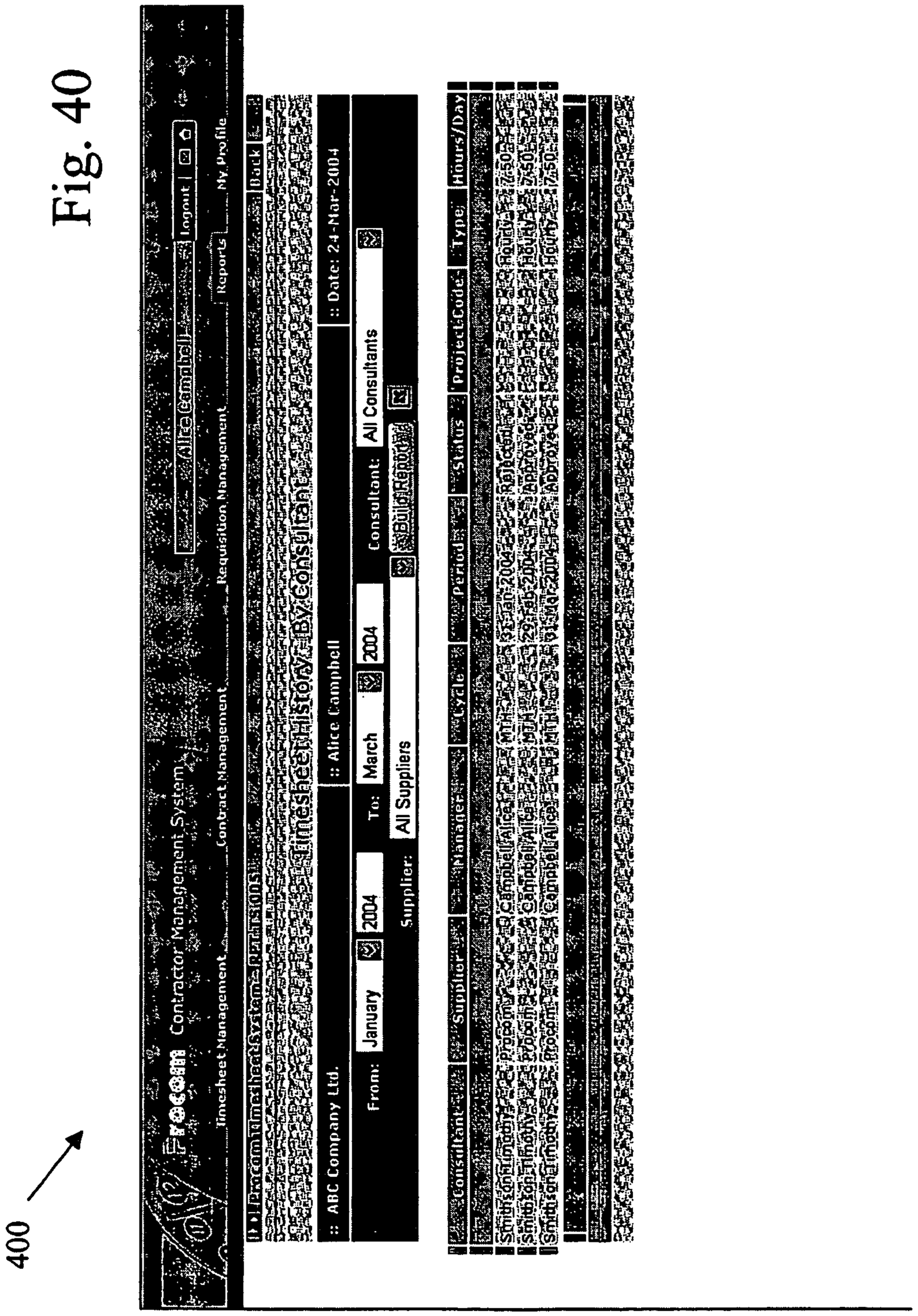

390
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Logout
My Profile
Reports
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Alice Campbell
Back
:: Date: 24-Mar-2004
Units
Type
Rate
Timesheets Not Submitted by Supplier
:: User: Client Manager
Contractor Name
Cycle
Period End
Status
Smith, Tim
Smith, Tim
:: Client : ABC Company Ltd.
Contract Number
Manager Name
Supplier Procom
Campbell, Alice
Campbell, Alice

Fig. 39

Fig. 40


Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Alice Campbell
Logout
My Profile
Back
Timesheet History - By Consultant
:: Alice Campbell
:: Date: 24-Mar-2004
From: March 2004
To: March 2004
Consultant: All Consultants
Supplier: All Suppliers
Build Report
Consultant
Supplier
Manager
Cycle
Period
Status
Project Code
Type
Hours/Day
From: January
:: ABC Company Ltd.

400

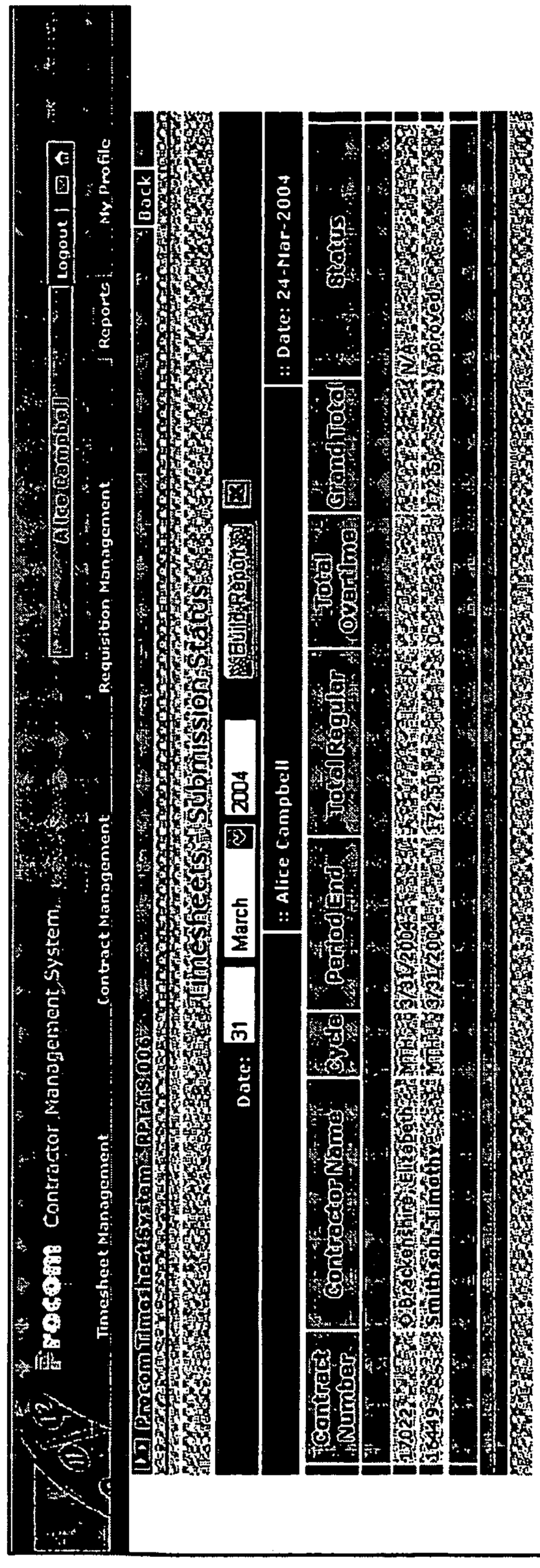

410
Timesheet Management
Contractor Management System
Logout
My Profile
Back
Timesheet Submission Status
Date: 24-Mar-2004
Build Report
Alice Campbell
March
2004
Contract Number
Contractor Name
Period End
Total Regular
Total Overtime
Grand Total
Status

Fig. 41

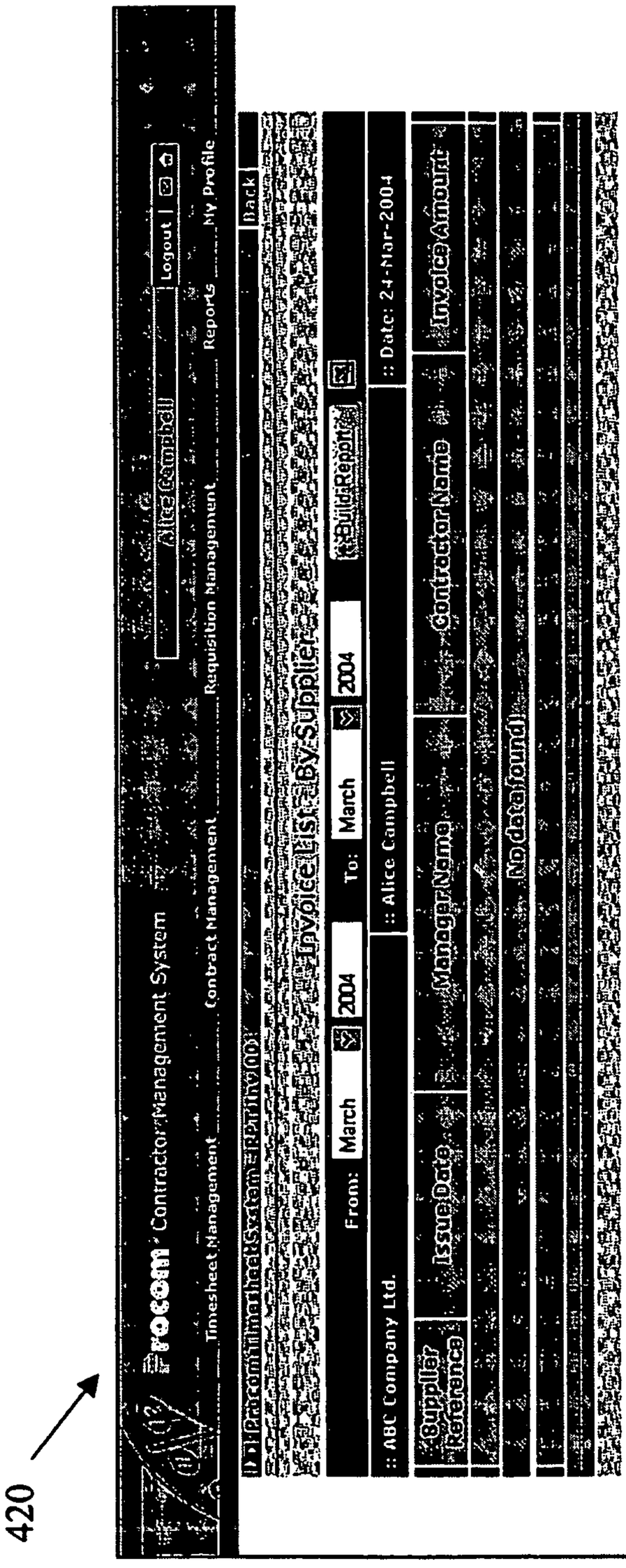

420
Procom Contractor Management System
Alice Campbell
Logout
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheet Management
My Profile
Reports
Back
Invoice LIST BY Supplier
From: March
To: March
2004
2004
Build Report
:: Alice Campbell
:: ABC Company Ltd.
Manager Name
Contractor Name
Supplier Reference
Issue Date
No data found!

Fig. 42

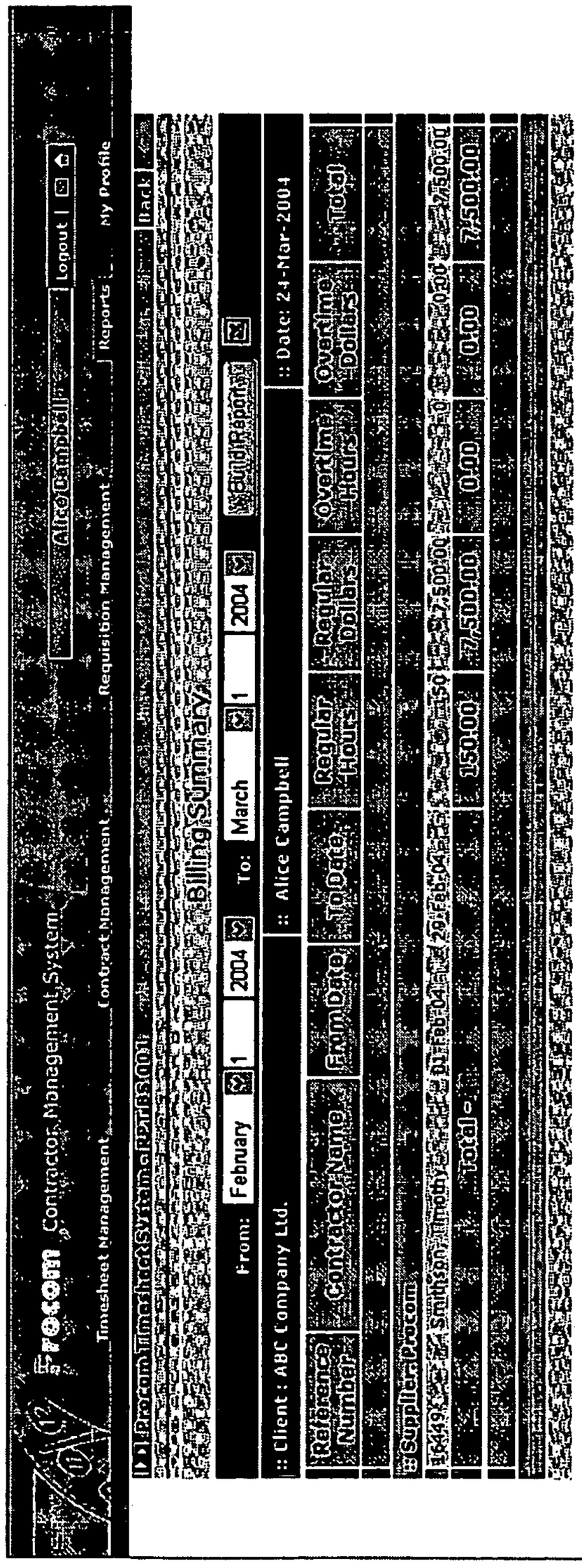

430
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Logout
Reports
My Profile
Alice Campbell
Billing Summary
From: 1 February 2004
To: 1 March 2004
:: Alice Campbell
:: Client : ABC Company Ltd.
Reference Number
Contractor Name
From Date
To Date
Regular Hours
Regular Dollars
Overtime Hours
Overtime Dollars
Total
Supplier: Procom
Smith, Timothy
01-Feb-04
29-Feb-04
150.00
7,500.00
0.00
0.00
7,500.00

Fig. 43

Fig. 44

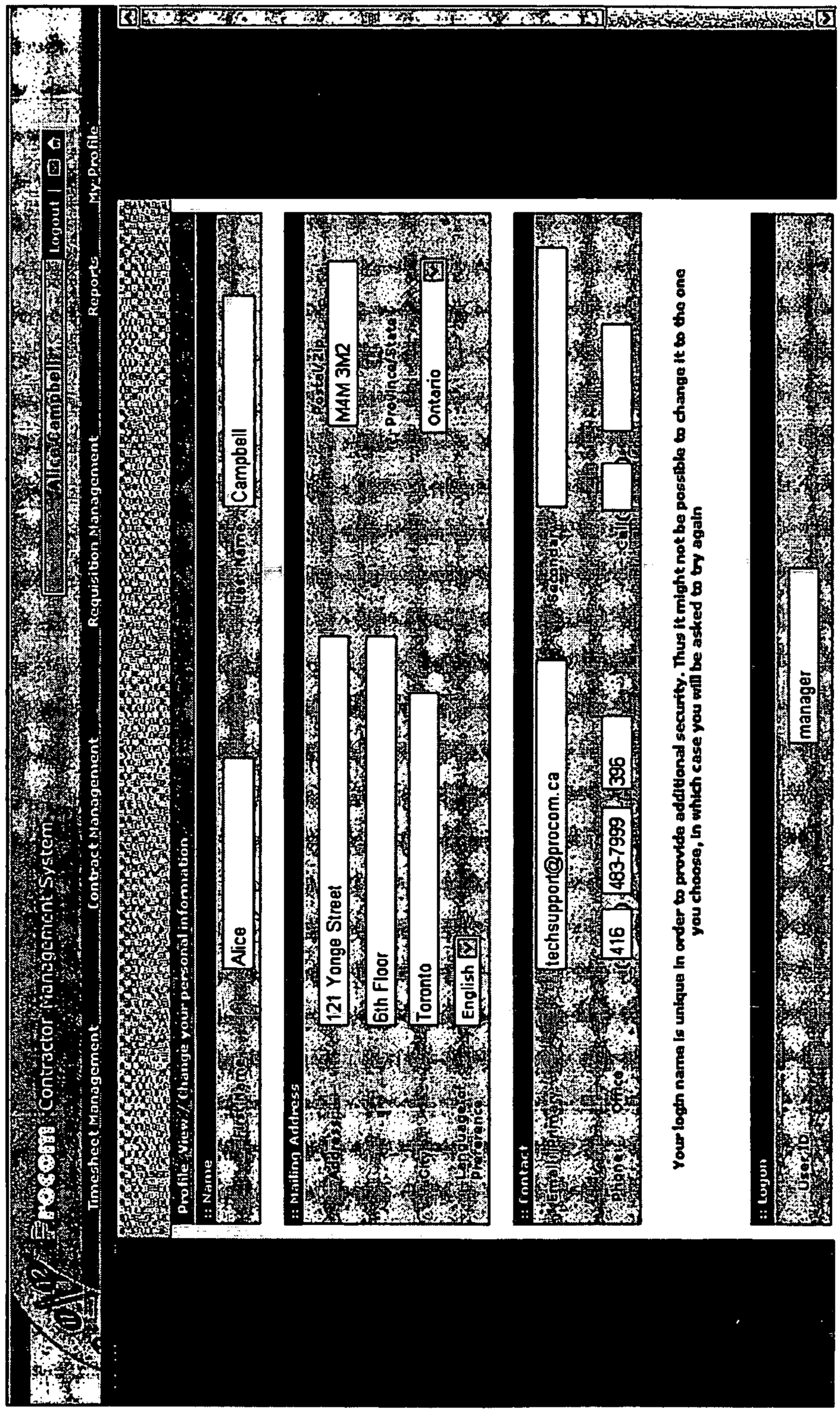

Contract Management
Requisition Management
Timesheet Management
Profile View / Change your personal information
:: Name
First Name
Alice
Last Name
Campbell
:: Mailing Address
Address
121 Yonge Street
6th Floor
City
Toronto
Province/State
Ontario
Postal/Zip
M4M 3M2
Language of Preference
English
:: Contact
Email
techsupport@procom.ca
Secondary
Phone
Office
(416
483-7999
396
Cell
:: Logon
User ID
manager
Your login name is unique in order to provide additional security. Thus it might not be possible to change it to the one you choose, in which case you will be asked to try again
440

Fig. 45

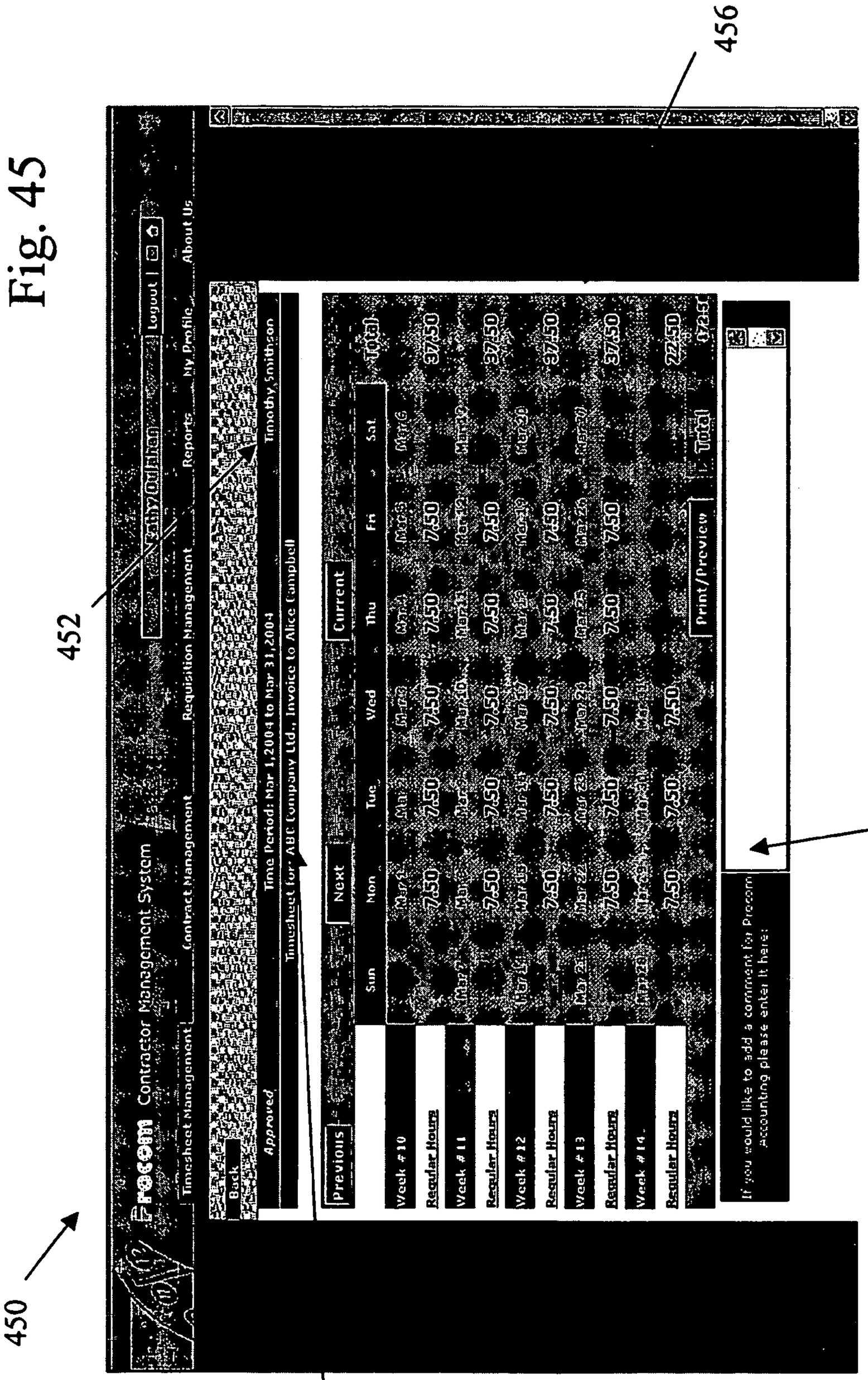

456
452
458
450
454
Contract Management System
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
Timesheet Management
Time Period: Mar 1, 2004 to Mar 31, 2004
Timesheet for: ABC Company Ltd., Invoice to Alice Campbell
Timothy Smithson
Next
Current
Previous
Print/Preview
Back
Approved
Sun
Mon
Tue
Wed
Thu
Fri
Sat
Total
Week # 10
Week # 11
Week # 12
Week # 13
Week # 14
Regular Hours
7.50
37.50
Add a comment for Procom
If you would like to add
accounting pleas

Fig. 46

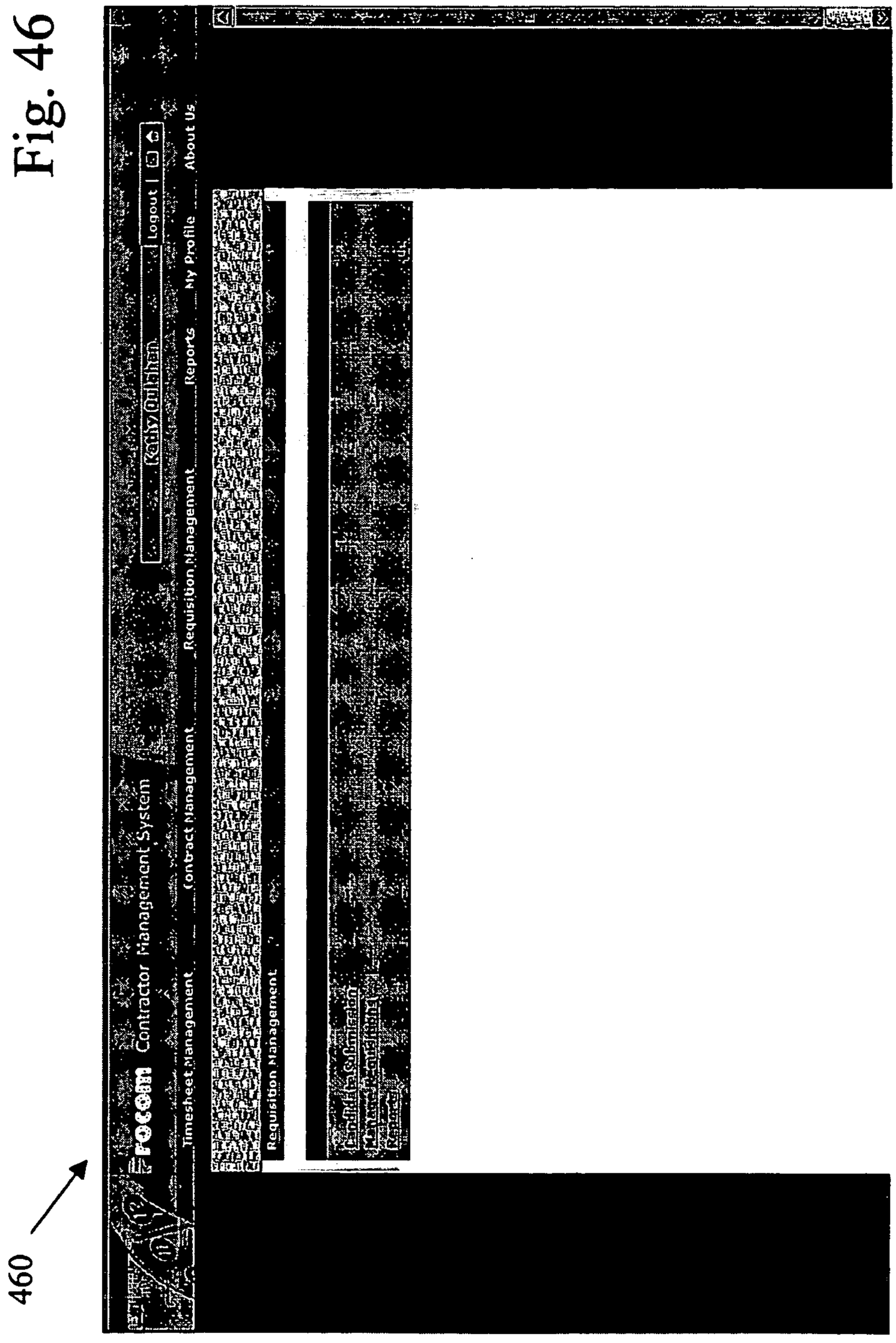
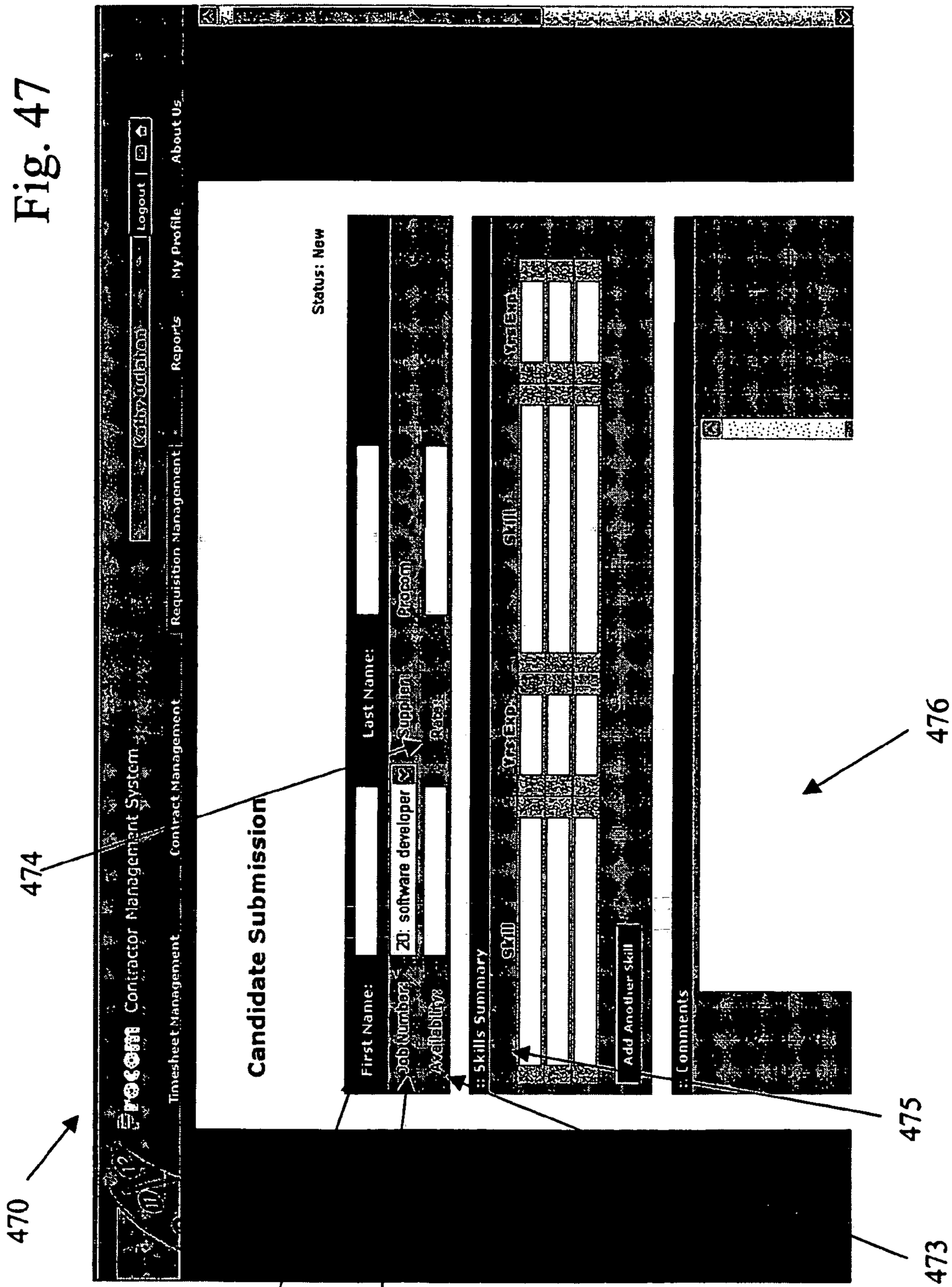

Logout
About Us
Contractor Management System
Kathy Quinlan
Profile
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
Timesheet Management
Requisition Management
460

Fig. 47


Contract Management System
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
Logout
About Us
Timesheet Management
Candidate Submission
First Name:
Last Name:
Job Number
Availability
Status: New
Add Another Skill
:: Skills Summary
:: Comments
470
471
472
473
474
475
476

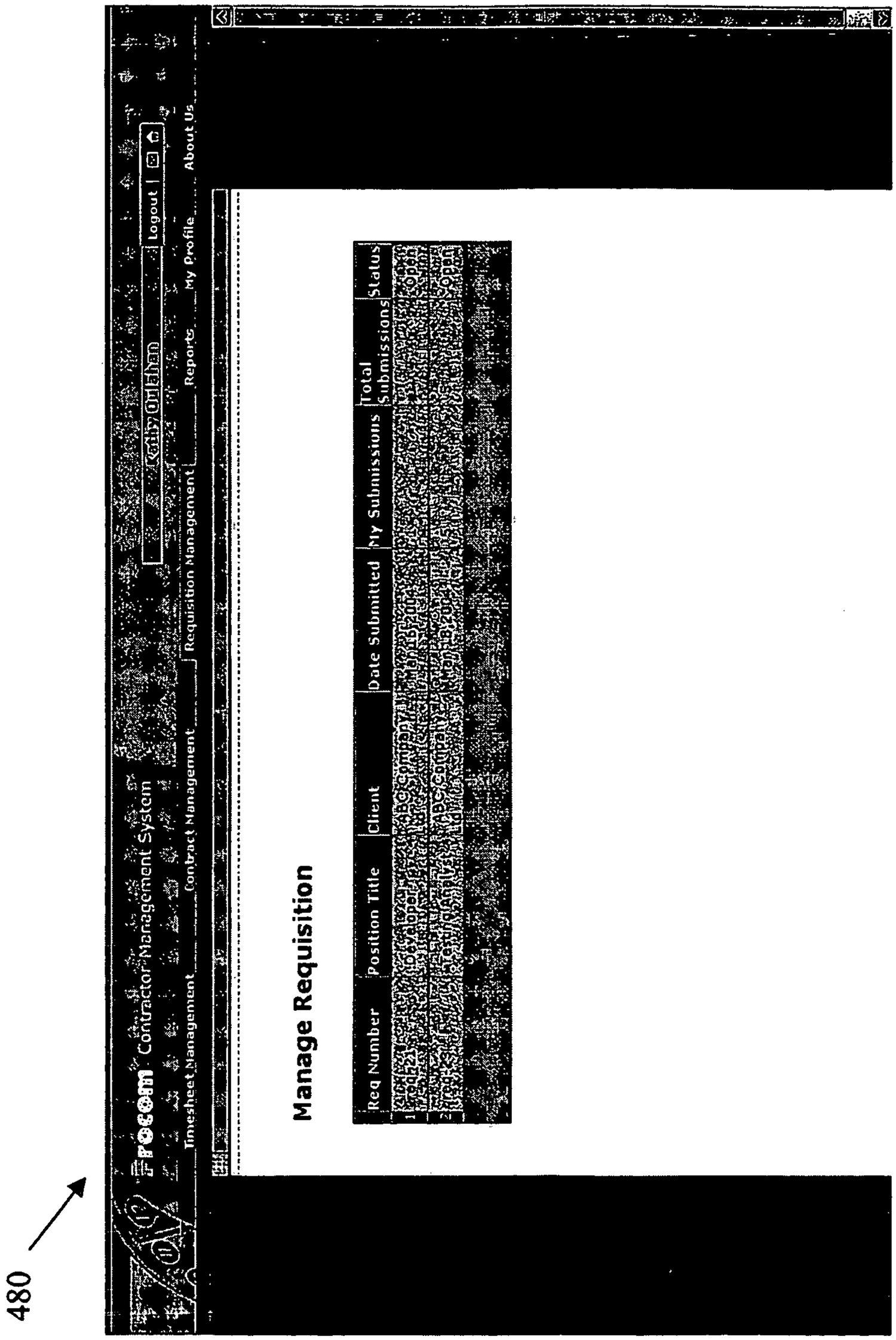

480
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
About Us
Logout
Manage Requisition
Req Number
Position Title
Client
Date Submitted
My Submissions
Total Submissions
Status

Fig. 48

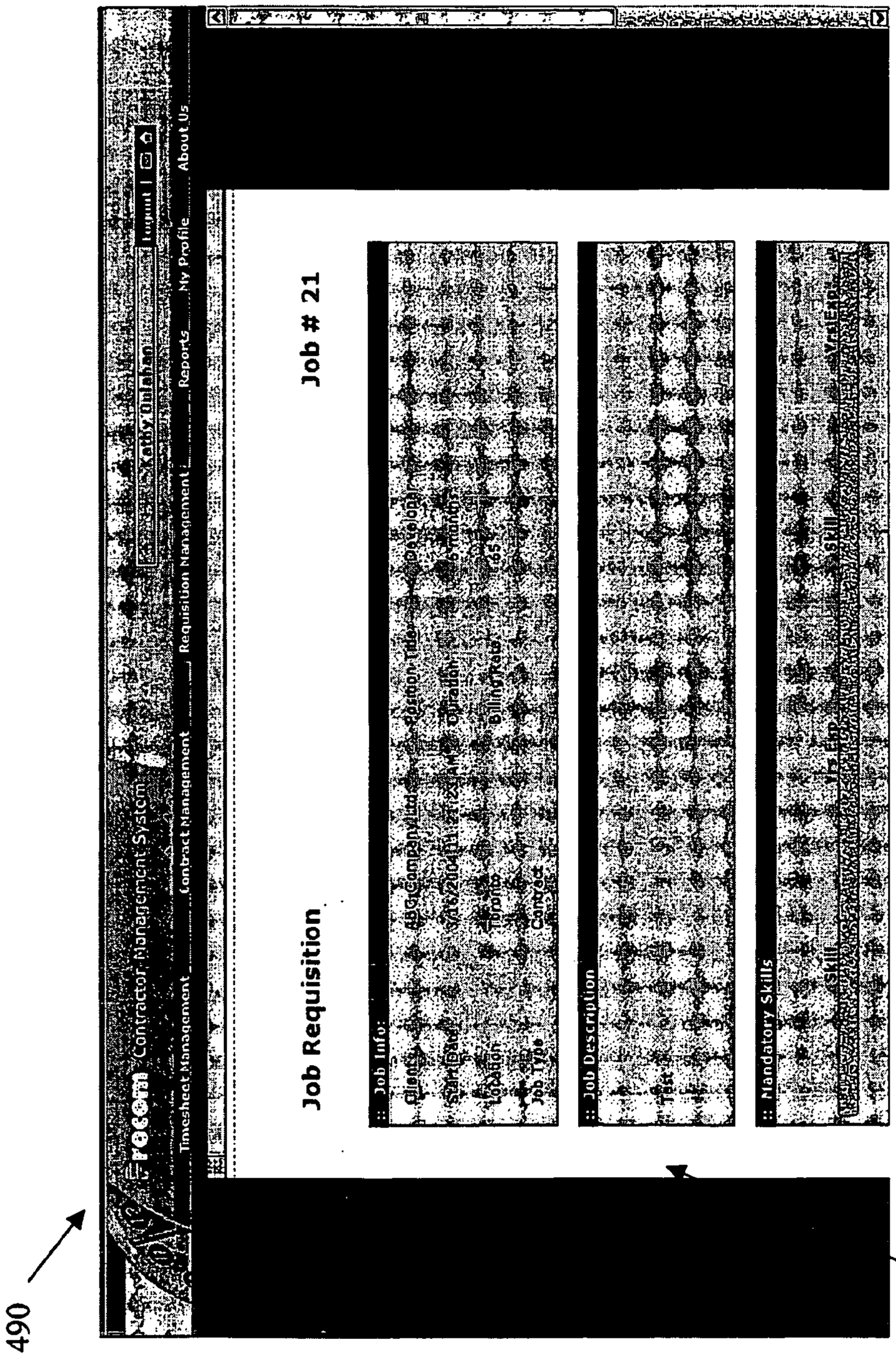

490
492
Job Requisition
Job # 21
Job Info:
Job Description
Mandatory Skills
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Timesheet Management
Contractor Management System

Fig. 49

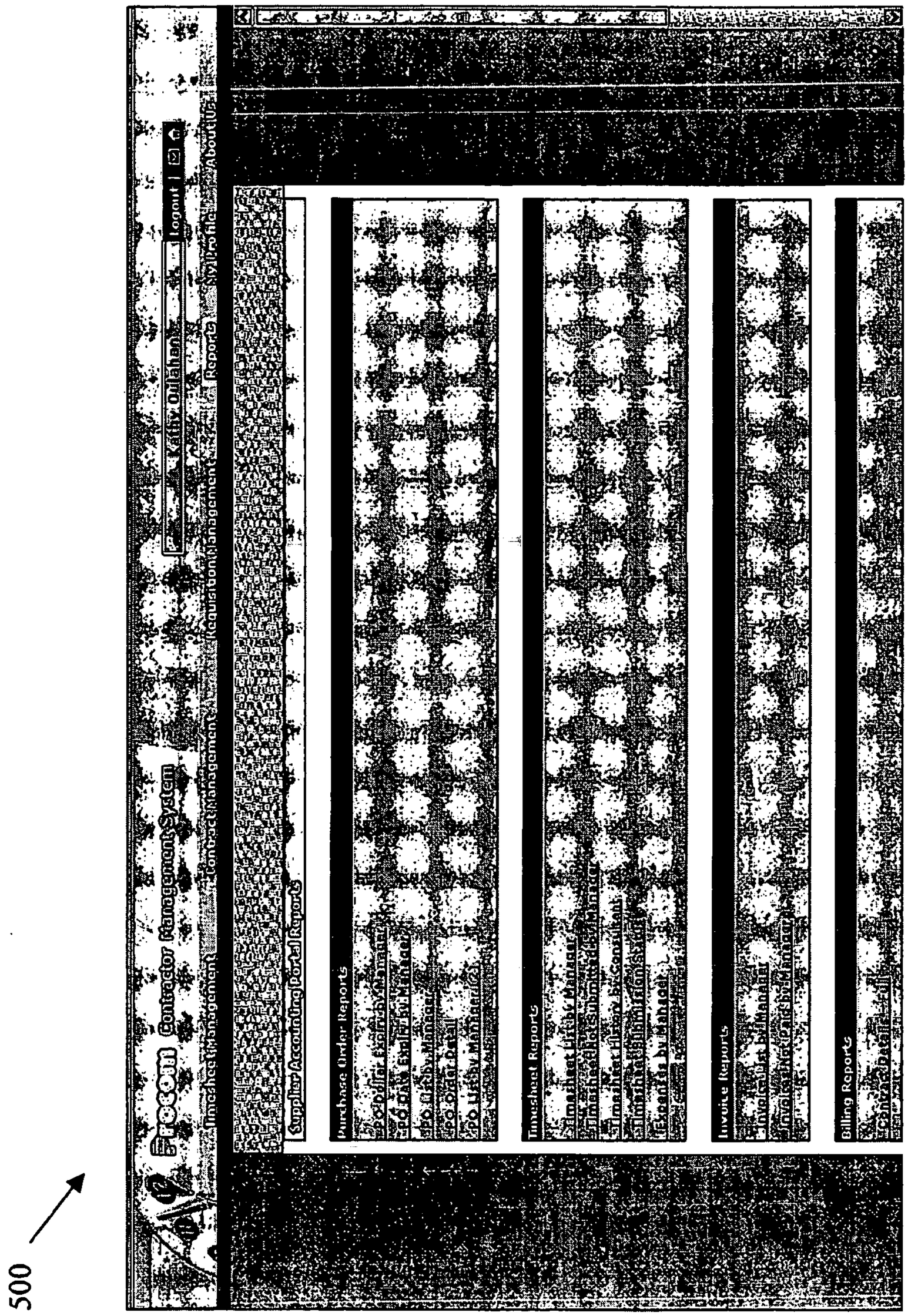

500
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Supplier Accounting Portal Reports
Purchase Order Reports
Timesheet Reports
Invoice Reports
Billing Reports
Kathy Oulahan
Logout
About Us

Fig. 50

Fig. 51

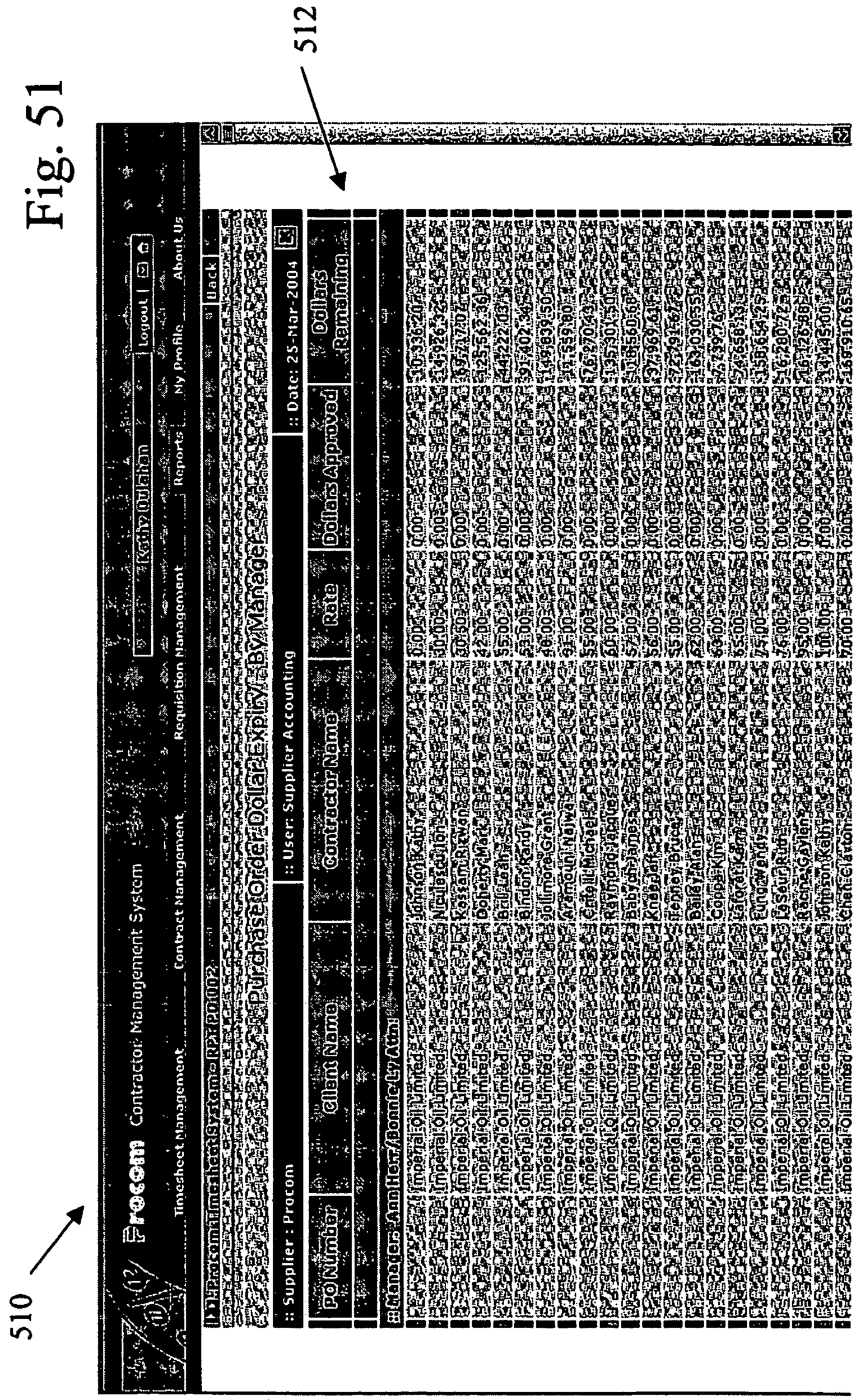

512
510
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Requisition Management
Contract Management
Reports
Kathy Mahlon
Logout
About Us
Back
Purchase Order Dollar Expiry By Manager
:: Supplier : Procom
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Date:
PO Number
Client Name
Contractor Name
Rate
Dollars Approved
Dollars Remaining
Manager: Ann Hert/Bonnie Ly Atm

Fig. 52

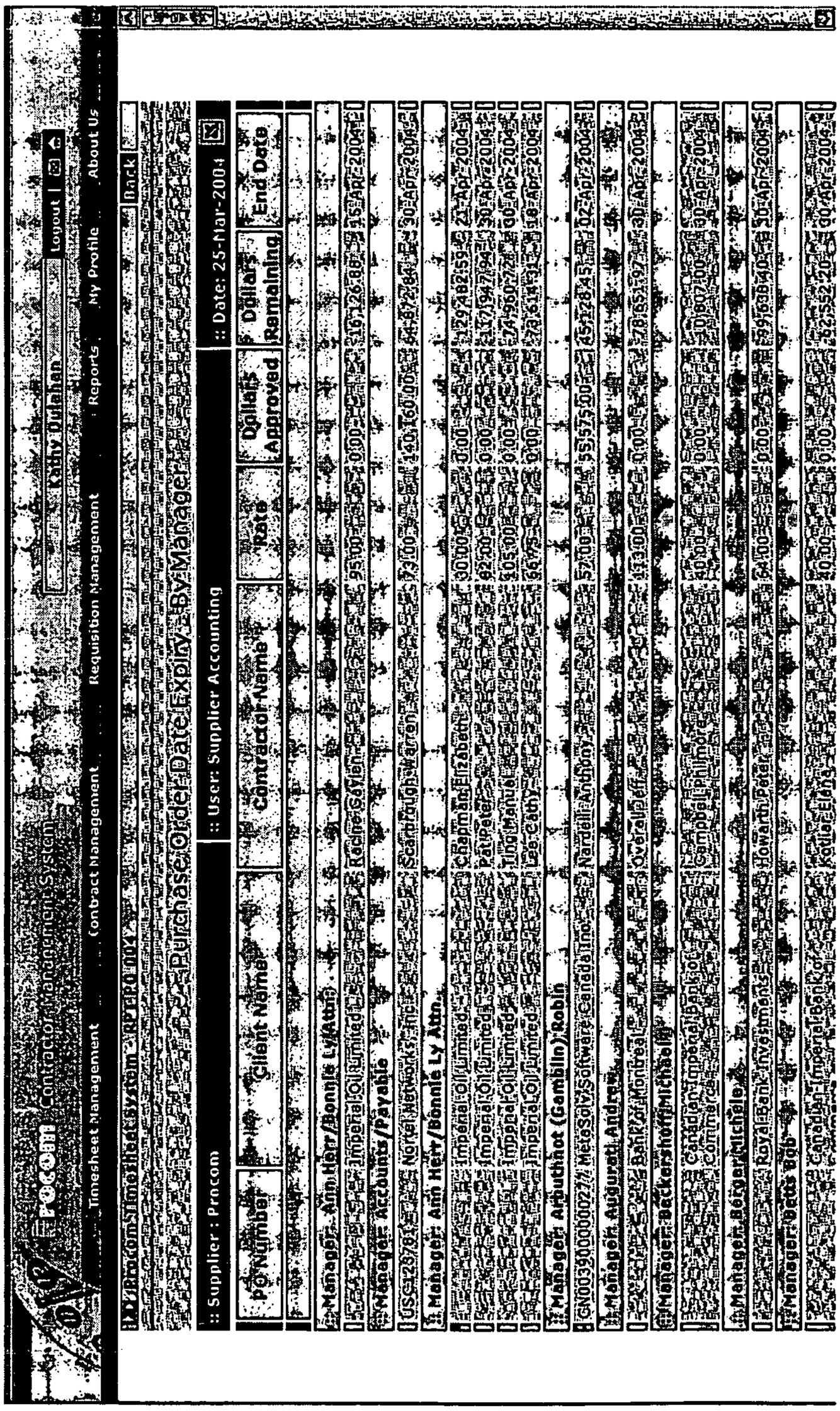

520
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Kathy Dufahan
Layout
My Profile
About Us
Back
:: Supplier : Procom
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
PO Number
Client Name
Contract Name
Rate
Dollars Approved
Dollars Remaining
End Date

Fig. 53

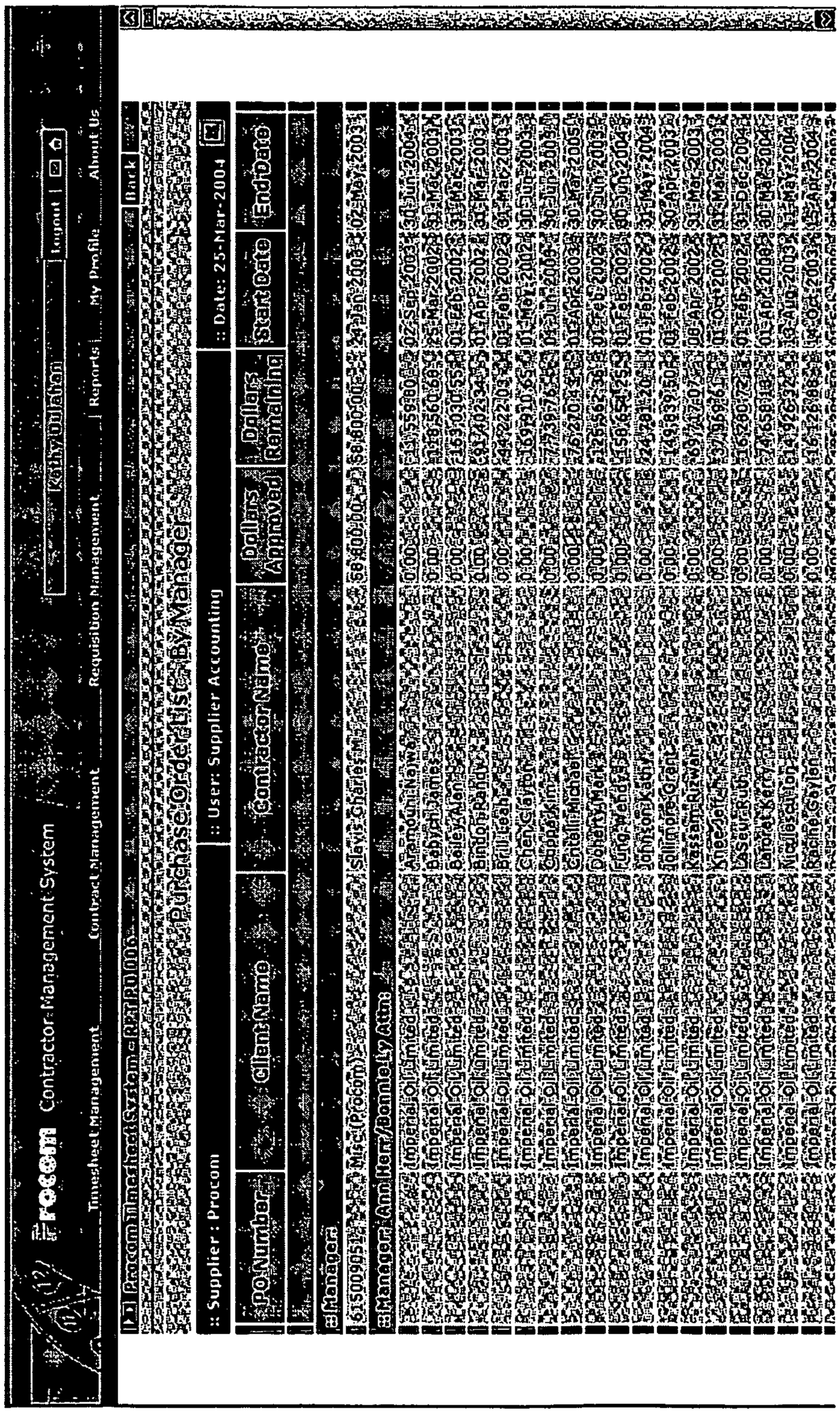

Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Kathy Dulahon
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Purchase Orders Issued By Manager
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Supplier : Procom
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
PO Number
Contractor Name
Dollars Approved
Dollars Remaining
Start Date
Endate
Manager
Client Name
530

Fig. 54

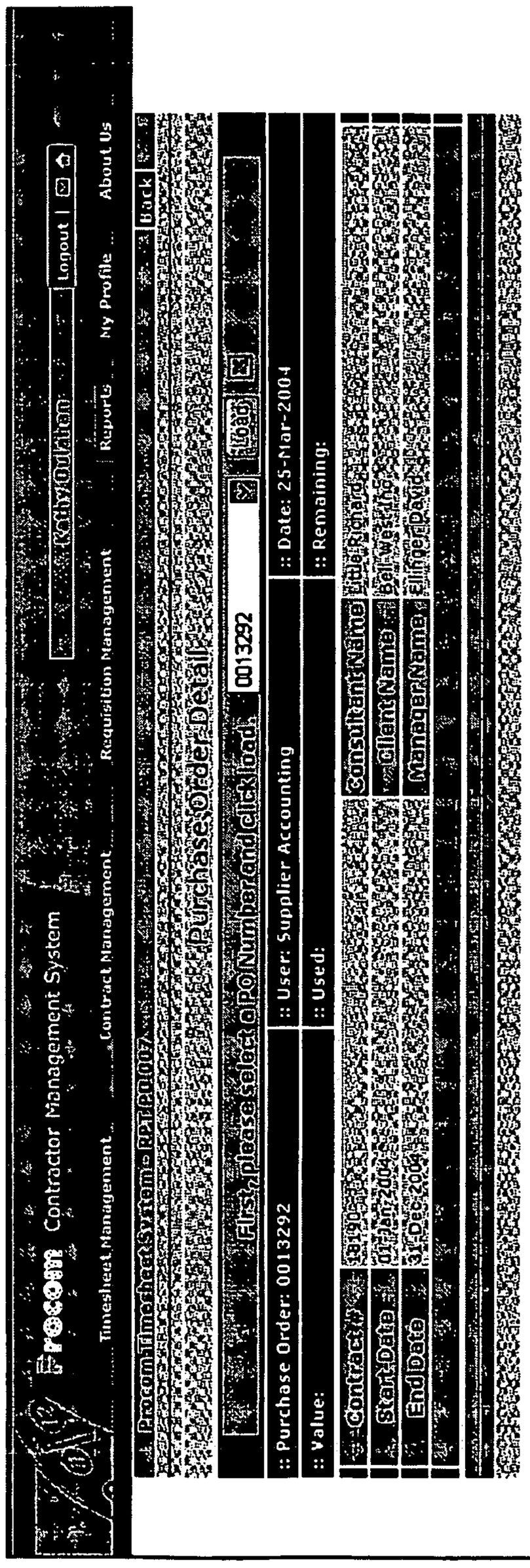

540
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Requisition Management
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Reports
Procom Timesheet System - RPT_PO_007
Purchase Order Detail
Click a PO Number and click load.
0013292
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Used:
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
:: Remaining:
First, please select a
:: Purchase Order: 0013292
:: Value:
Contractor
Start Date
End Date
ConsultantName
ClientName
ManagerName
Little Richard
Bell westing
Elliner David

Fig. 55

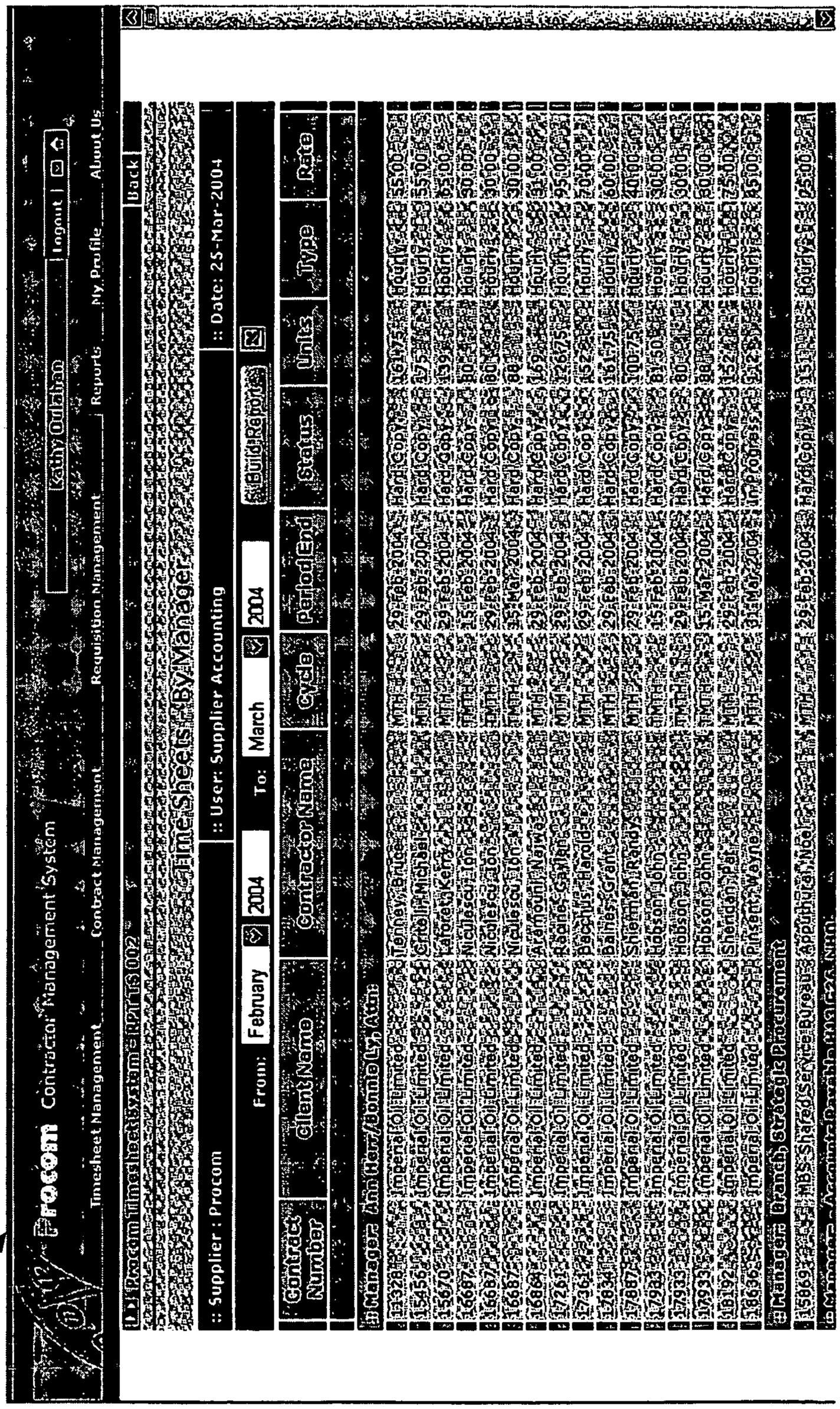
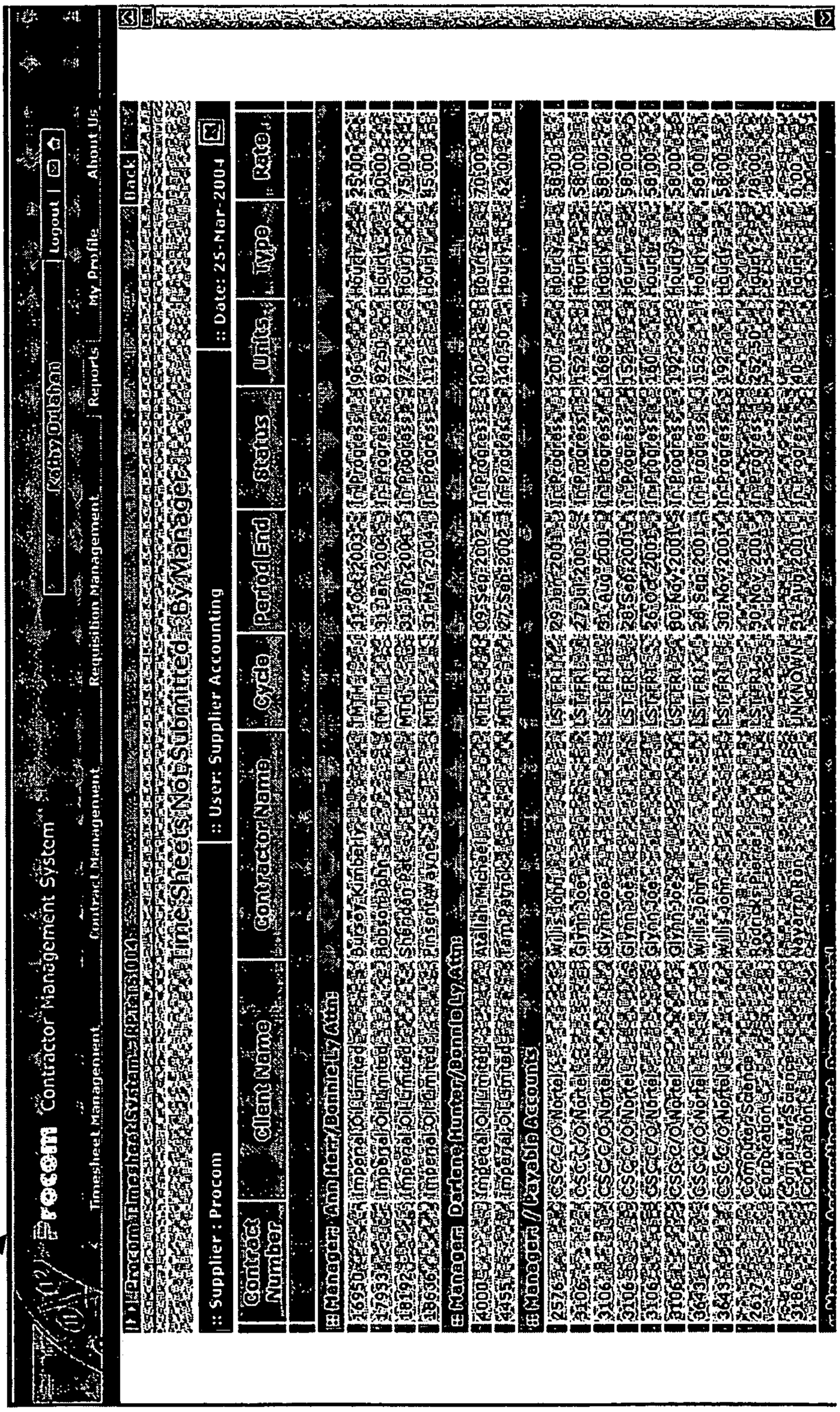

550
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Kathy Outlaw
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Procom Timesheet System - RPT-TS-002
Timesheet Management By Manager
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Supplier : Procom
From: February
To: March
2004
Contractor Name
Cycle
Period End
Status
Build Report
Back
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
Units
Type
Rate
Contract Number
Client Name
Manager Ann Herr/Bonnie Ly, Ann

Fig. 56


560
Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Kathy Ouban
Requisition Management
Reports
Back
Timesheets Not Submitted By Manager
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Supplier : Procom
Contract Number
Client Name
Contractor Name
Cycle
Period End
Status
Units
Type
Rate
Manager: Ann Kerr/Bonnie Ly Atm
Manager: Darlene Hunter/Bonnie Ly Atm
Manager // Payable Accounts

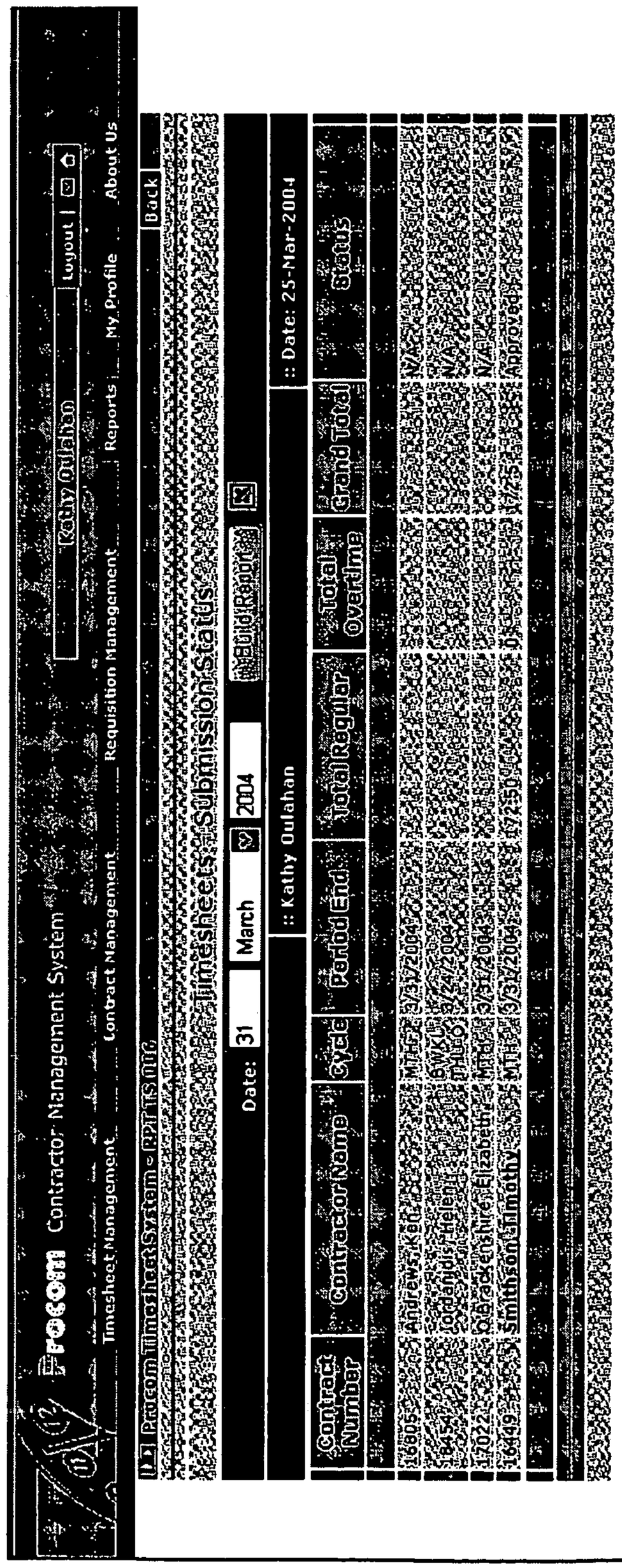

570
Procom Contractor Management System
Kathy Oulahan
Timesheet Management
Requisition Management
Reports
About Us
My Profile
Layout
Back
Timesheets Submission status
Procom Timesheet System - RPT TS 006
Date: 31
March
2004
Build Report
:: Kathy Oulahan
Contract Number
Contractor Name
Cycle
Period End
Total Regular
Total Overtime
Grand Total
Date: 25-Mar-2004
Status
16805 Andrews, Ken MTD 3/31/2004 N/A
18454 Jordandis, Helen 6WKLY 3/24/2004 N/A
17022 Oberkersh, Elizabeth MTD 3/31/2004 N/A
16449 Smithson, Timothy MTD 3/31/2004 Approved

Fig. 57

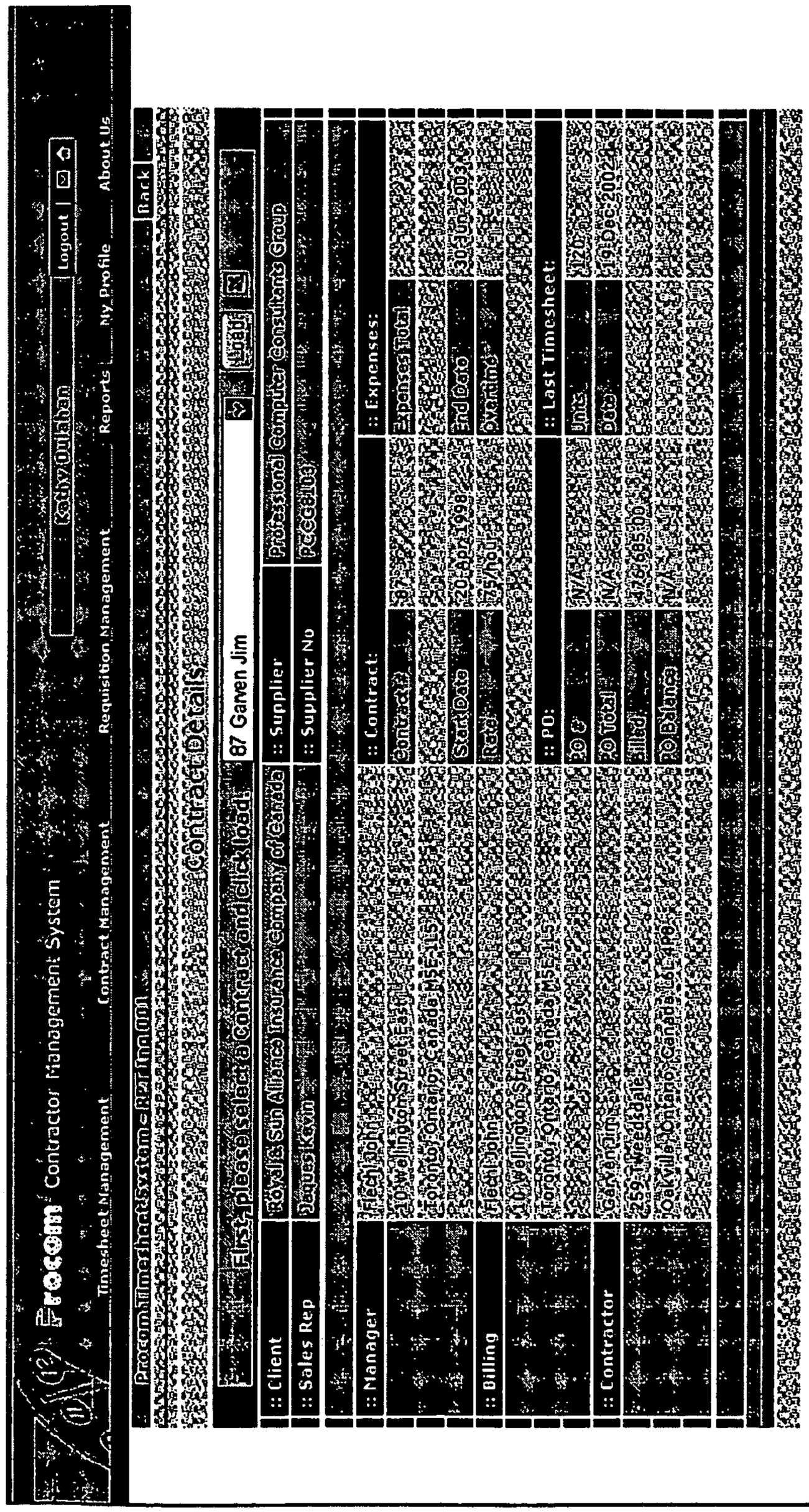

580
Procom Contractor Management System - R21 Final UAT
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Contract Details
First please select a Contractor
:: Client
:: Sales Rep
:: Manager
:: Billing
:: Contractor
:: Contract:
:: PO:
:: Expenses:
:: Last Timesheet:

Fig. 58

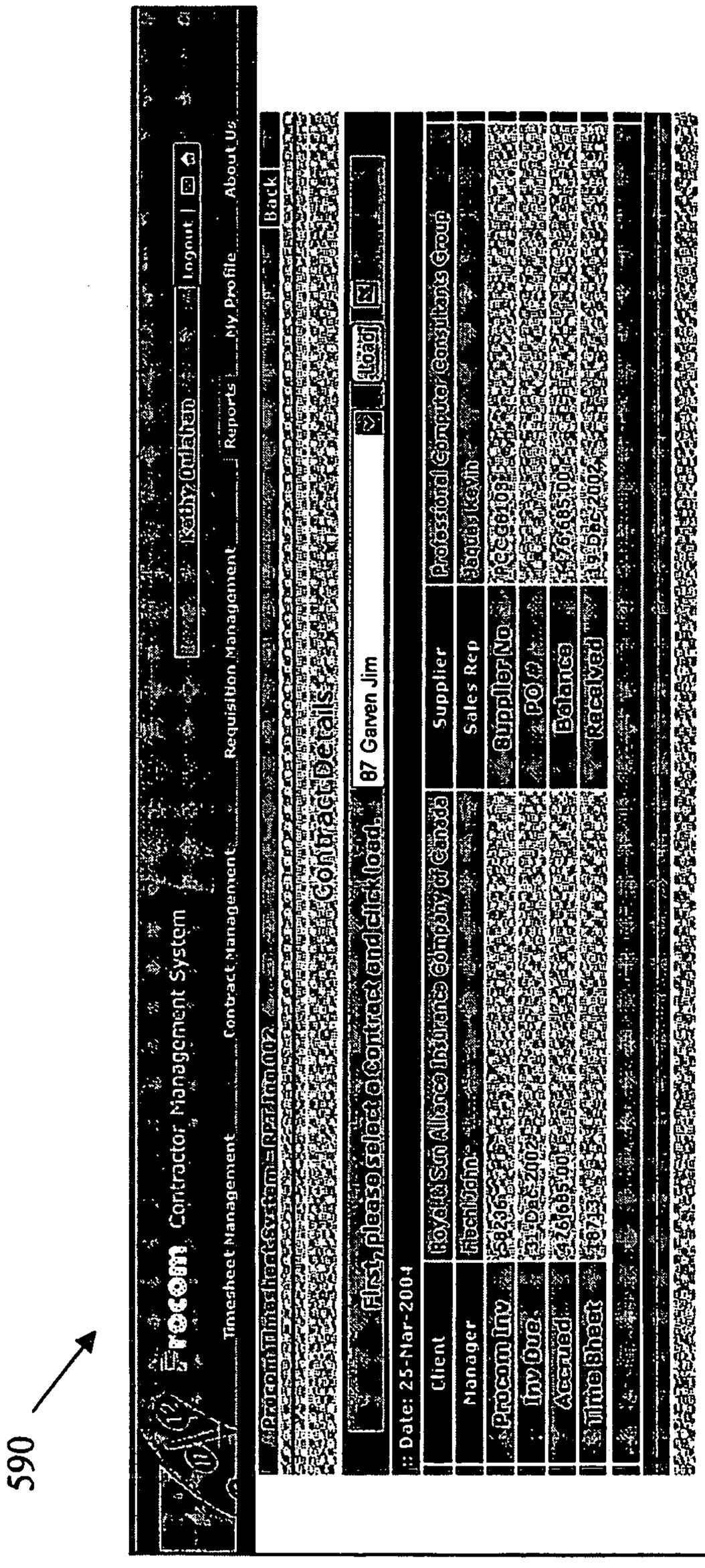

590
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Report
Kathy Culahan
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Load
Contract Details
First, please select a contract and click load.
87 Garven Jim
Date: 25-Mar-2004
Client
Manager
Procom Inv
Inv Due
Accrued
Time Sheet
Supplier
Sales Rep
Supplier No
PO #
Balance
Received

Fig. 59

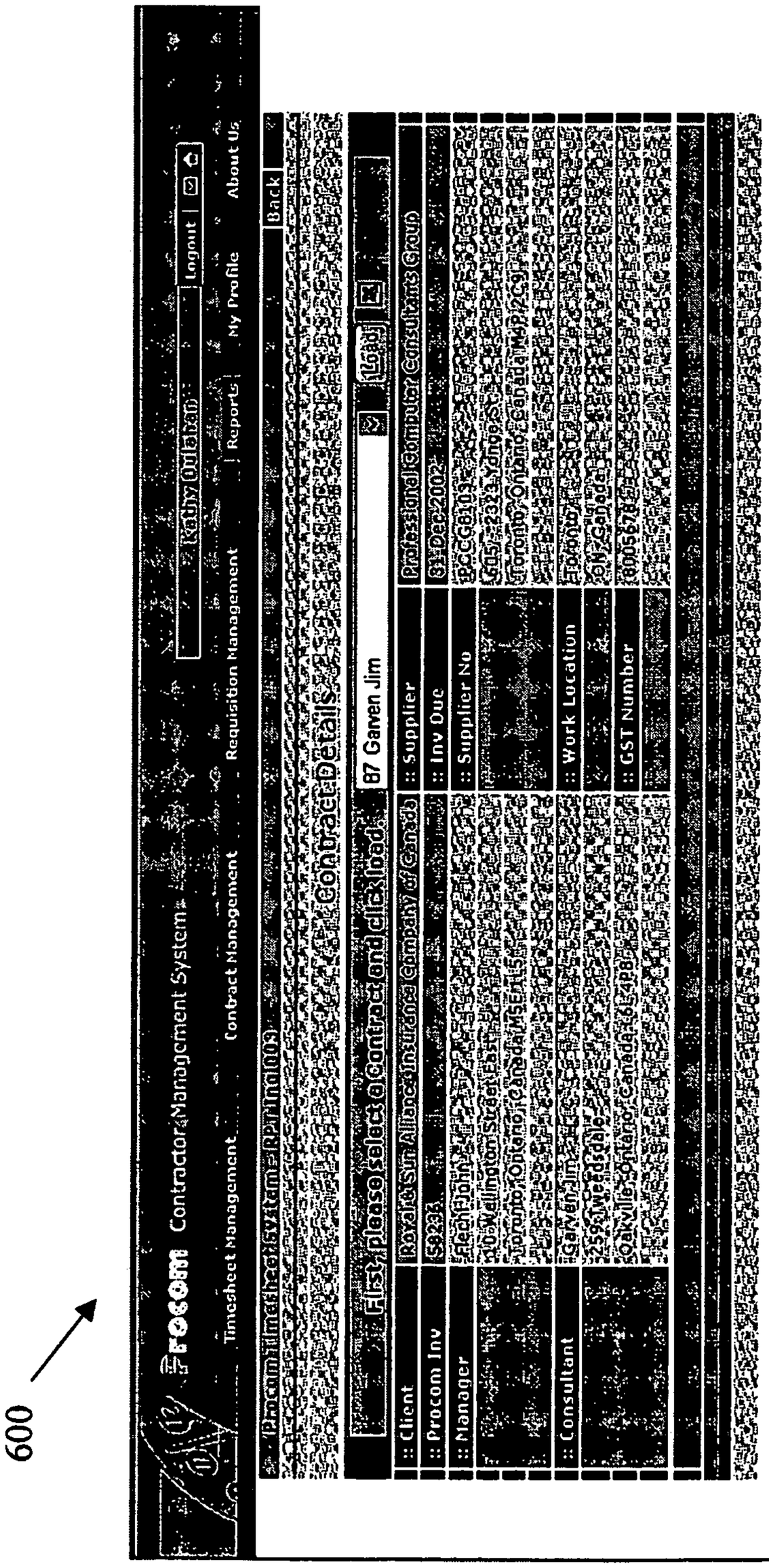

600
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
About Us
Logout
Back
Contract Details
Procom Timesheet System
Please select a Contract and click load.
87 Garven Jim
:: Client
:: Procom Inv
:: Manager
:: Consultant
:: Supplier
:: Inv Due
:: Supplier No
:: Work Location
:: GST Number

Fig. 60

Fig. 61

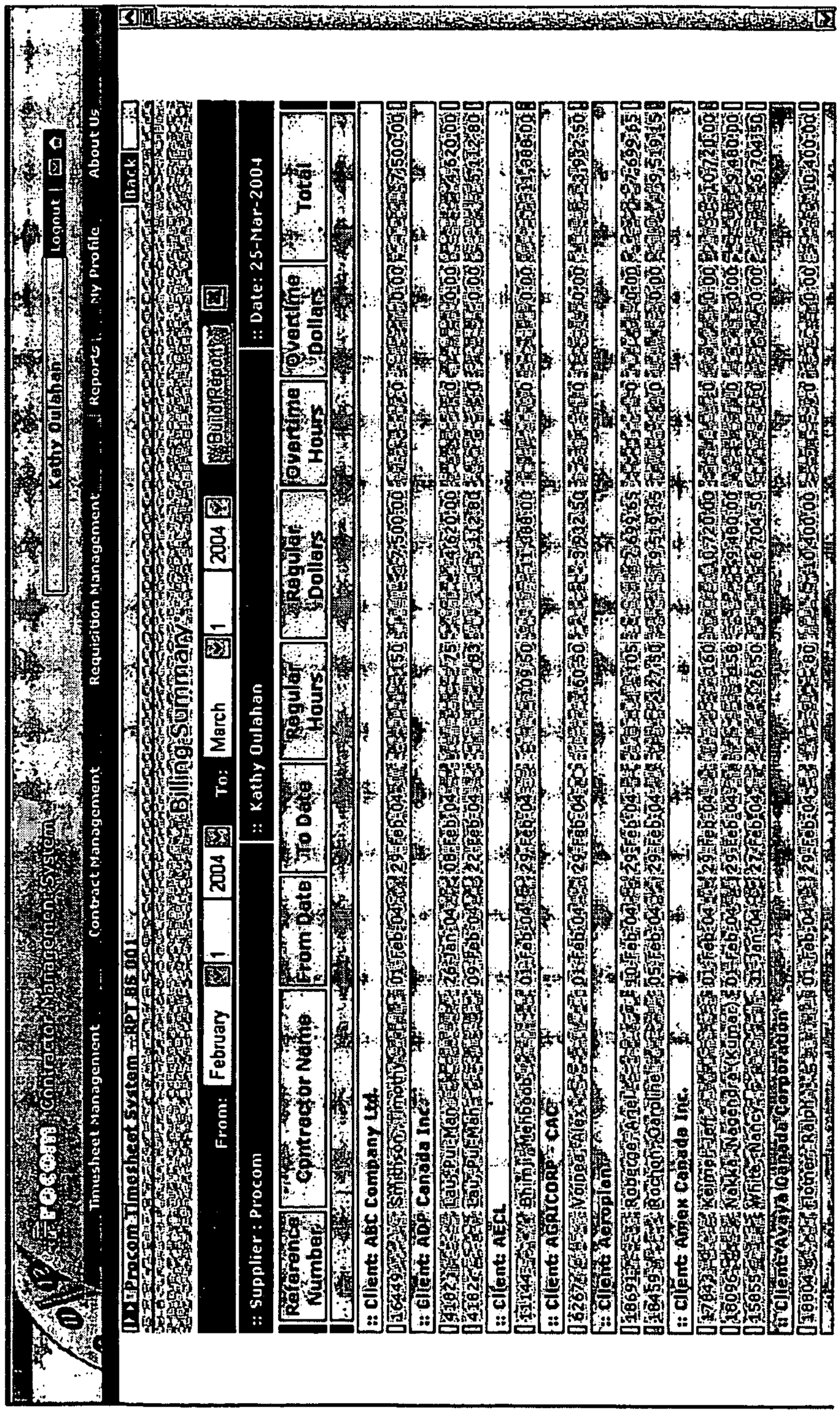

610
Contractor Management System
Logout
About Us
Profile
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
Kathy Oulahan
Back
Billing Summary
From: 1 2004
To: March 1 2004
BuildReport
:: Kathy Oulahan
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
From Date
To Date
Regular Hours
Regular Dollars
Overtime Hours
Overtime Dollars
Total
Procom Timesheet System - RPT 86
Timesheet Management
Procom
Contractor Management
:: Supplier : Procom
From: February
Reference Number
Contractor Name
:: Client ABC Company Ltd.
:: Client ADP Canada Inc.
:: Client AECL
:: Client AGRICORP - CAC
:: Client Aeroplan
:: Client Amex Canada Inc.
:: Client Avaya (Canada Corporation

Fig. 62

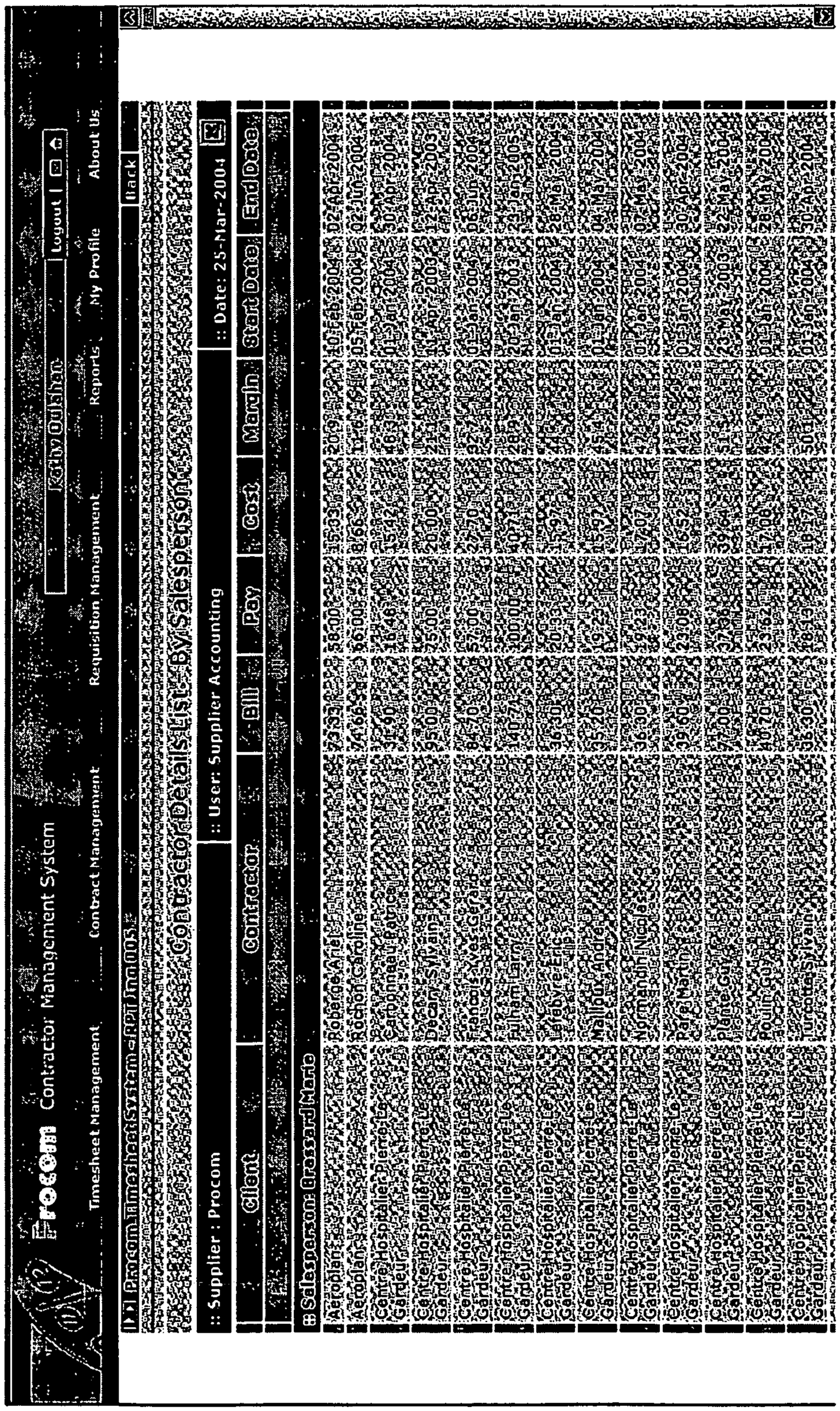

Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Kathy Dulshan
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Procom Timesheet System -[RPT Im005]
Contractor Details List - By Salesperson
:: User: Supplier Accounting
Contractor
Bill
Pay
Cost
Margin
:: Supplier : Procom
Client
Start Date
End Date
Date: 25-Mar-2004
Salesperson: BrassardMario
620

Fig. 63

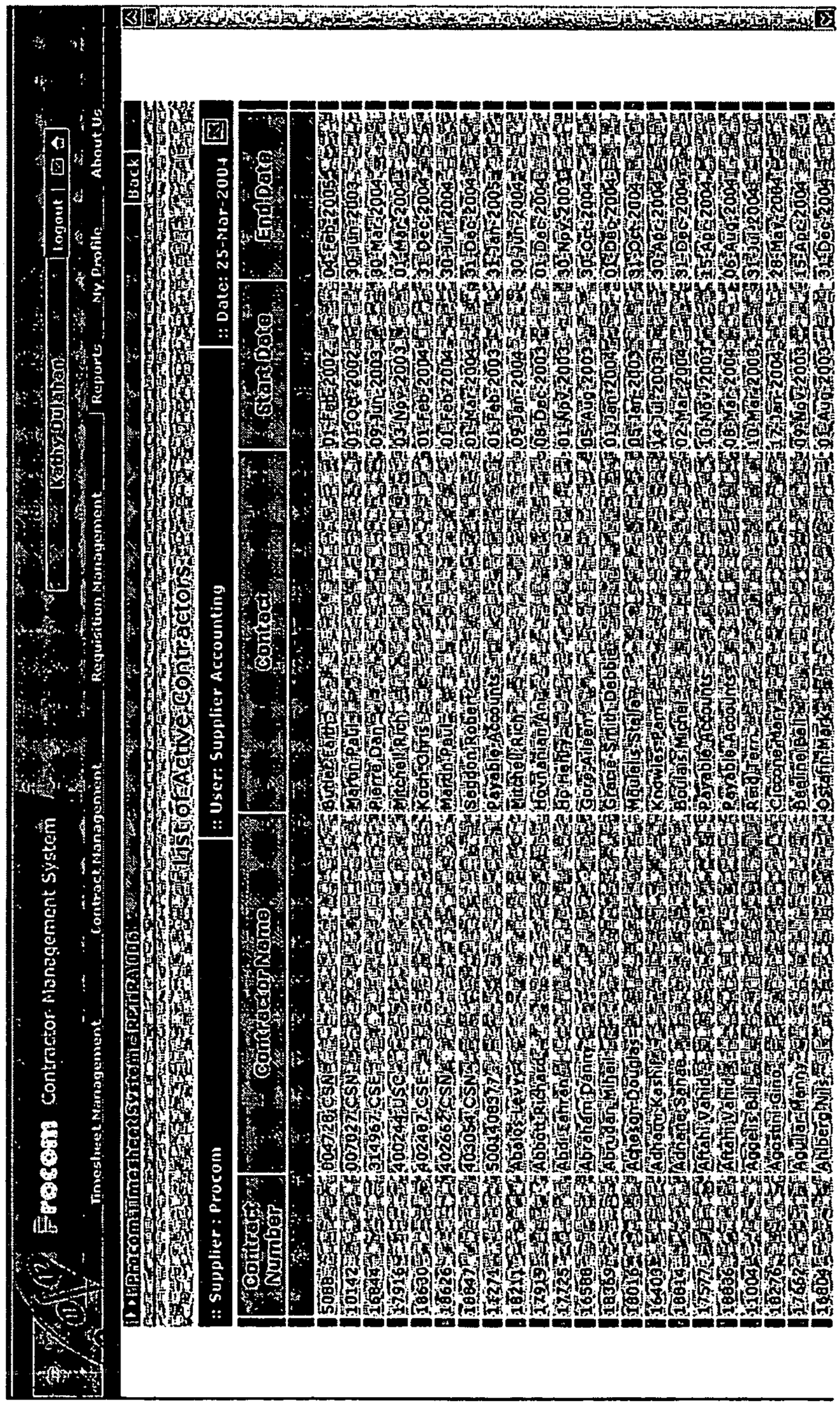

Procom
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Logout
About Us
Back
Kathy Dukhan
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My Profile
List of Active Contractors
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Date: 25-Mar-2004
:: Supplier : Procom
Contractor Name
Contact
Start Date
End Date
Contract Number
630

Fig. 64

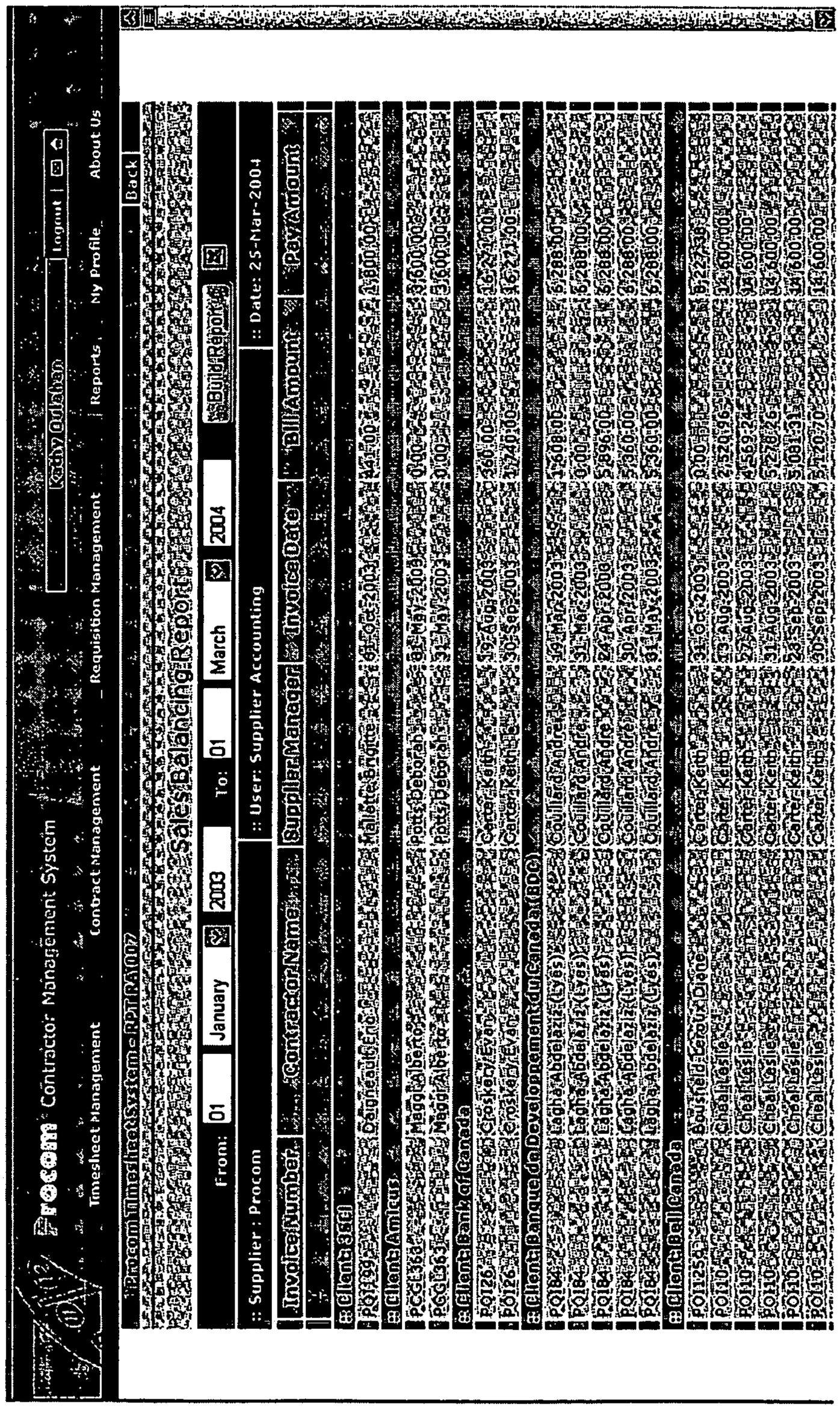

640
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Kathy Quahan
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
My
Procom Timesheet System - RPTRAY007
Sales Balance Report
From: 01 January 2003
To: 01 March 2004
BuildReport
:: Supplier : Procom
:: User: Supplier Accounting
:: Date:
InvoiceNumber
ContractorName
SupplierManager
InvoiceDate
BillAmount
PayAmount

Fig. 65

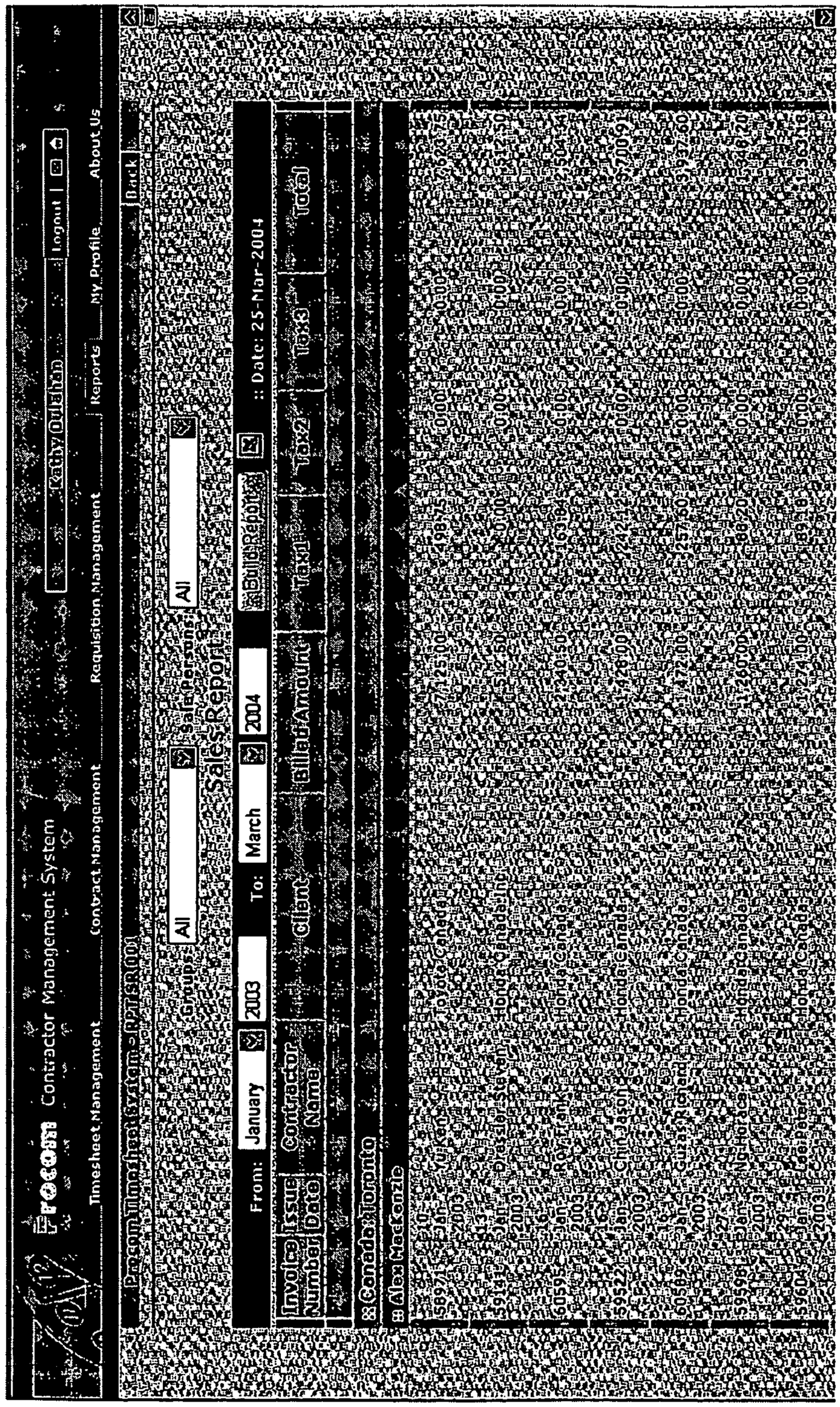

650
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Management
Contract Management
Requisition Management
Reports
Kathy Dulaney
Logout
My Profile
About Us
Back
Sales Report
Sale Persons:
All
From:
January
To:
March
2003
2004
Build Report
Client
Billed Amount
Tax1
Tax2
Total
Invoice Number
Issue Date
Contractor Name
Canada Toronto
Alex MacKenzie

Fig. 66

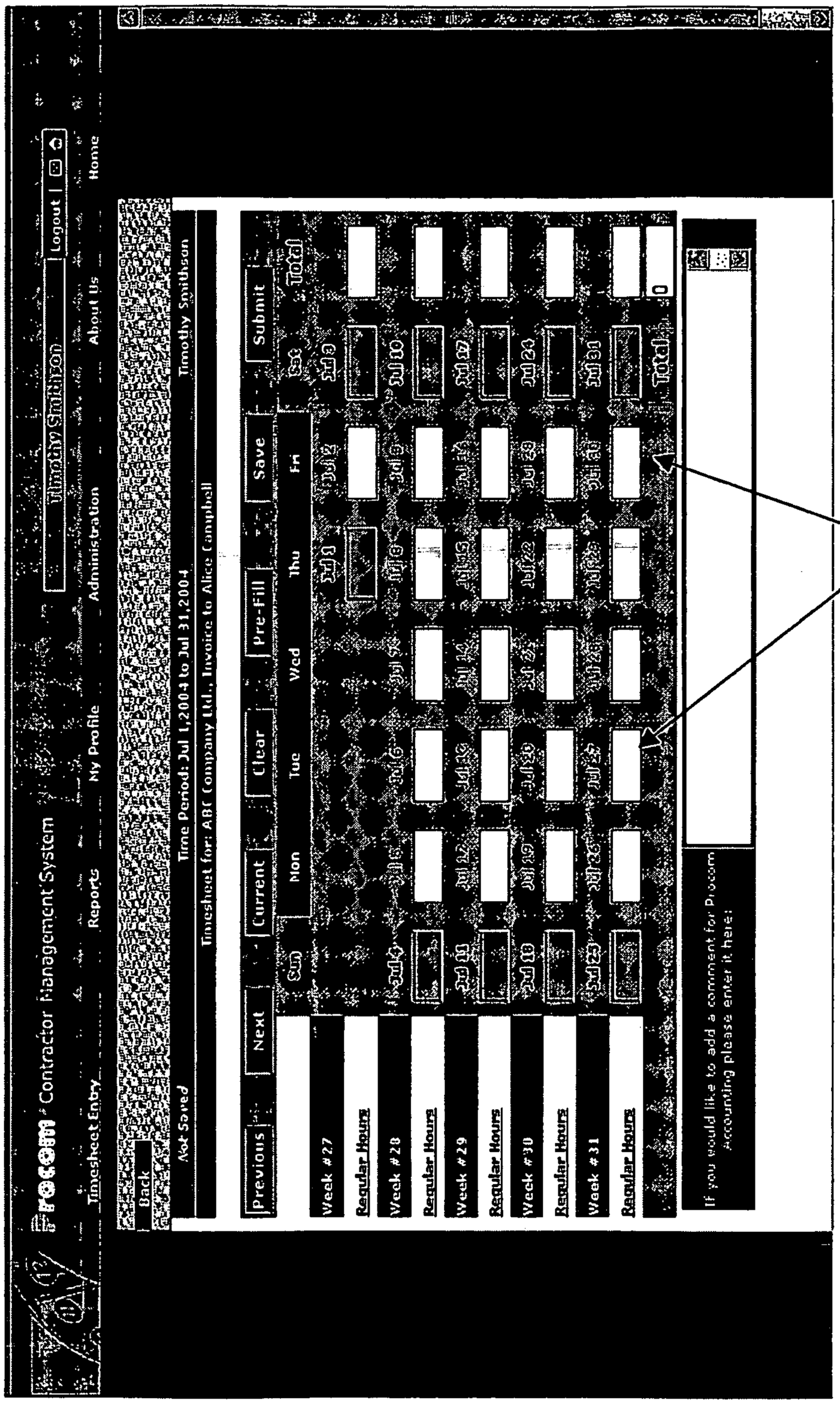


Fig. 67

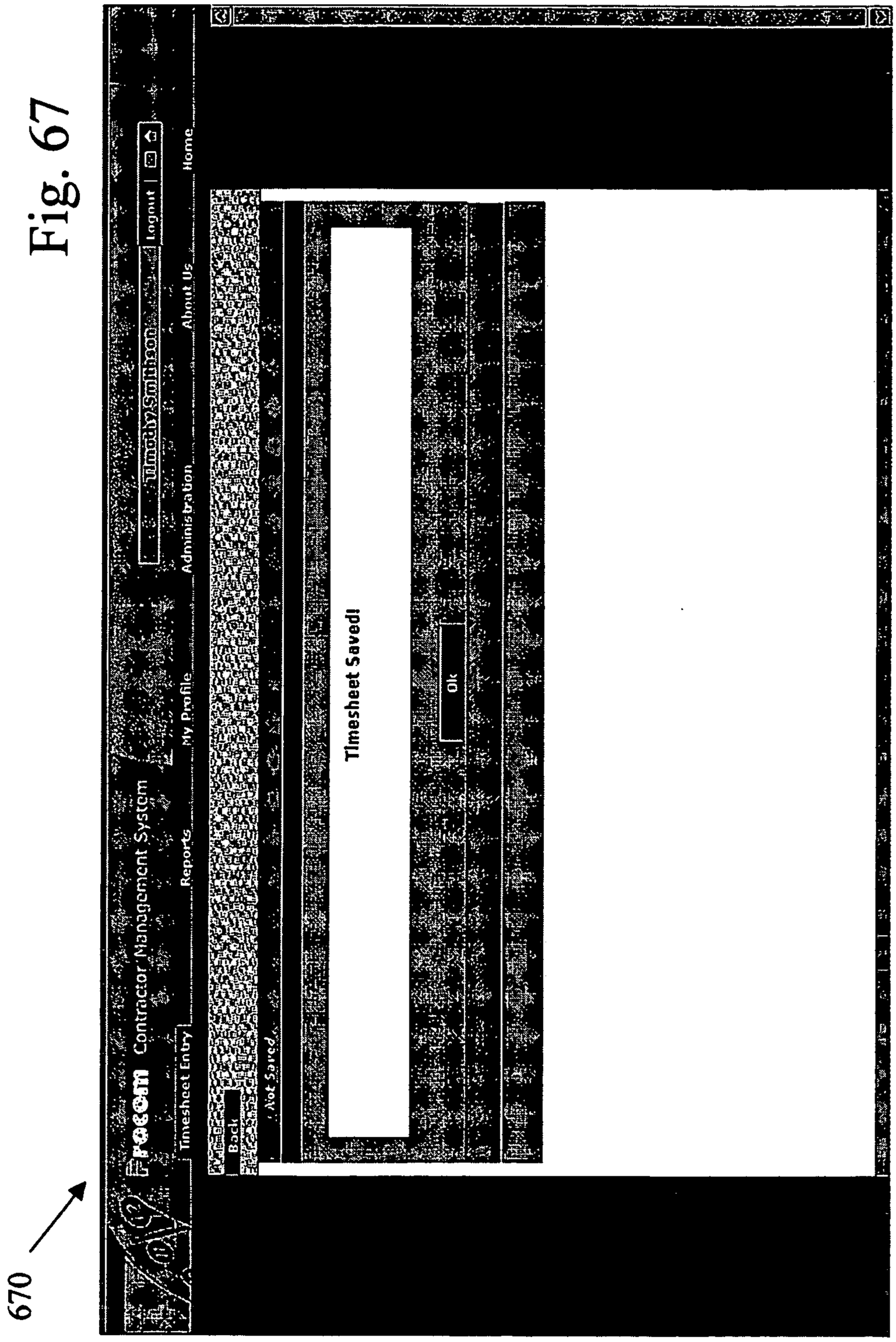
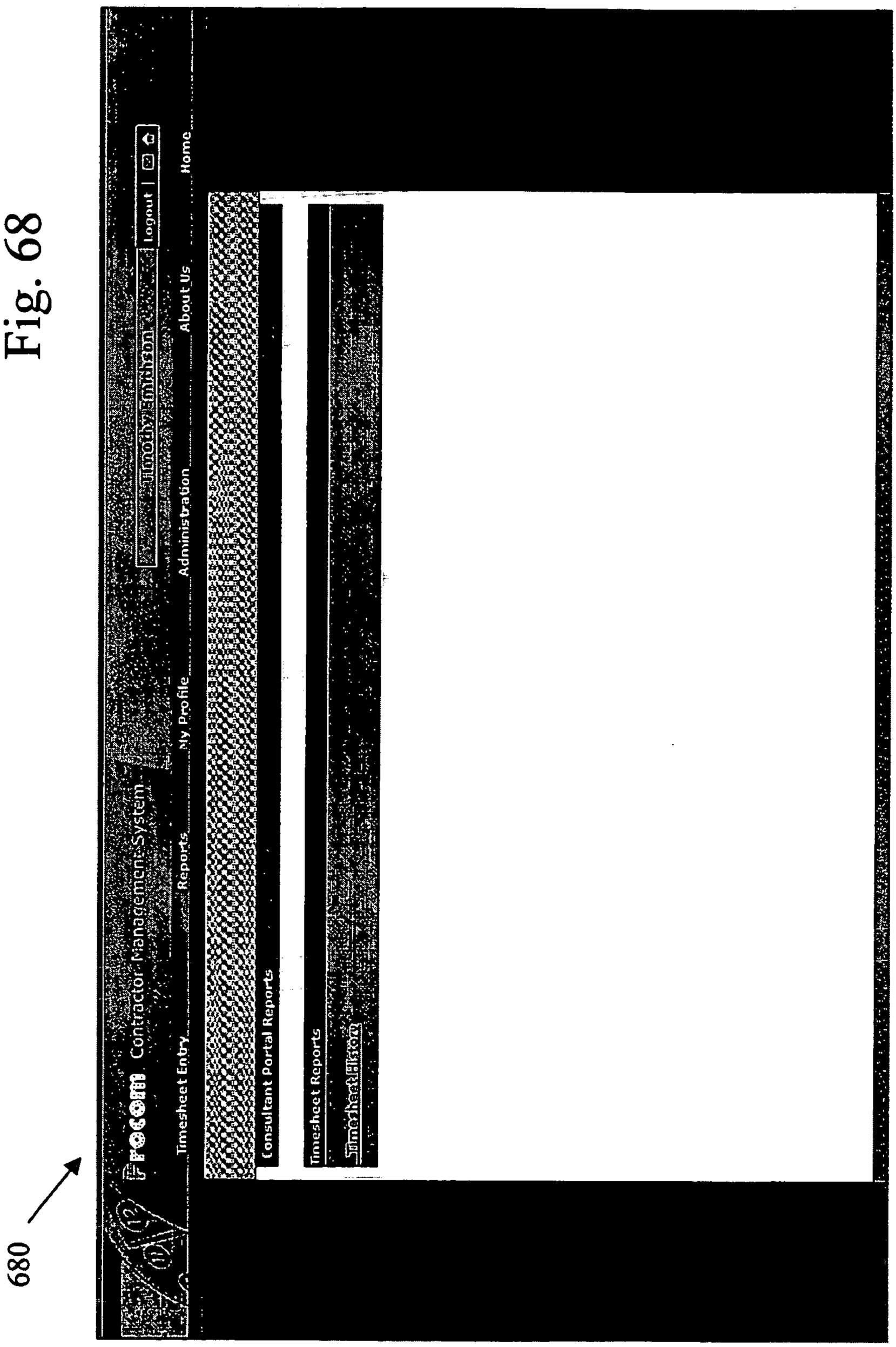

Home
Logout
About Us
Timothy Smith
Administration
My Profile
Reports
Contractor Management System
Timesheet Entry
Back
Not Saved
Timesheet Saved!
Ok
670

Fig. 68


680
PROCOM Contractor Management System
Timesheet Entry
Reports
My Profile
Administration
About Us
Logout
Home
Timothy Smith
Consultant Portal Reports
Timesheet Reports
Timesheet History

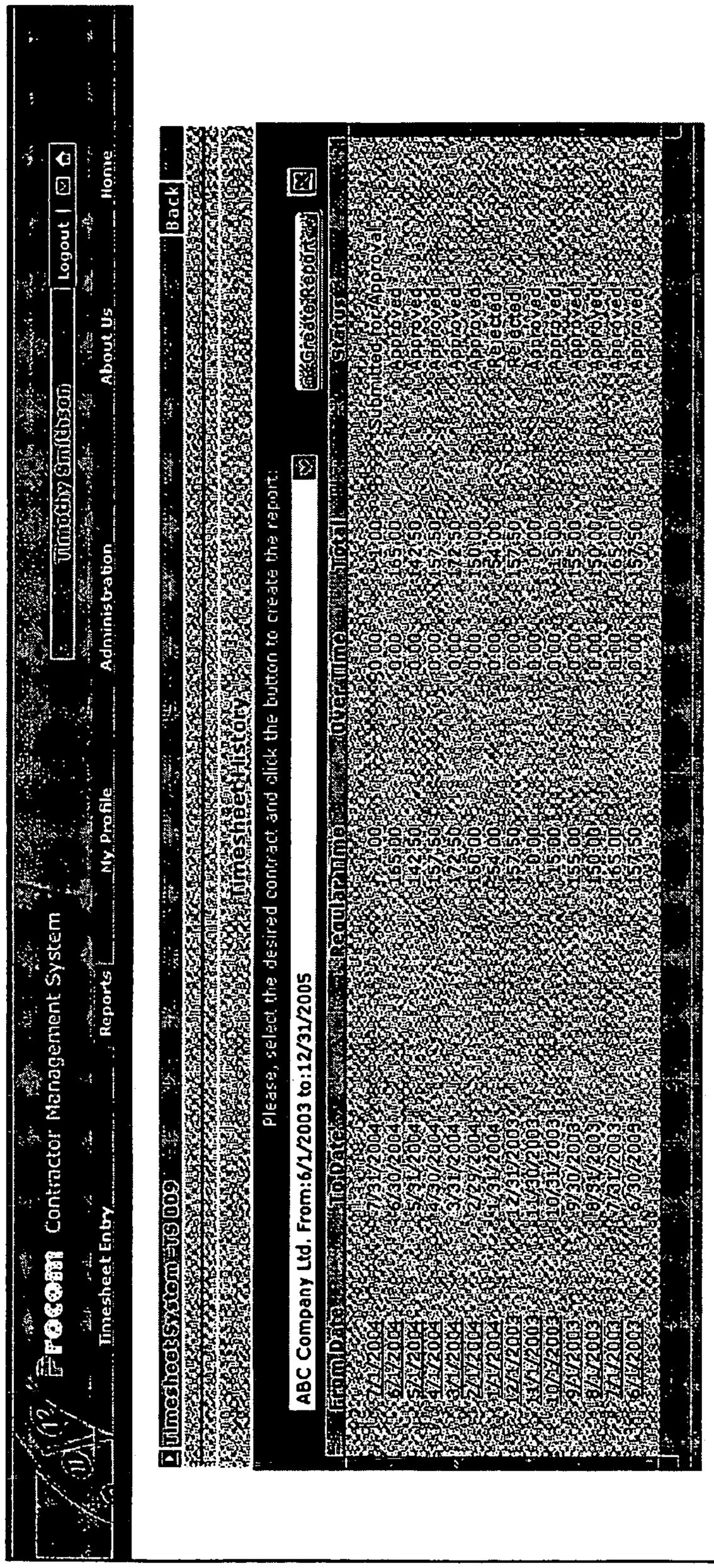

690
Procom Contractor Management System
Timesheet Entry
Timesheet System-US 009
Timothy Smithson
Logout
Home
Reports
My Profile
Administration
About Us
Back
timesheetHistory
Please, select the desired contract and click the button to create the report.
ABC Company Ltd. From:6/1/2003 to:12/31/2005
FromDate
ToDate
RegularHours
Overtime
Total
Status
GreaterReport

Fig. 69

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR IMPROVED TIME REPORTING AND BILLING

RELATED APPLICATIONS

The subject patent application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/862,762 filed on Jun. 7, 2004, the entire contents of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to time reporting and billing, and more particularly to an integrated time reporting and billing solution that facilitates billing and payment for time-related activities and manages contract workflow from end to end.

BACKGROUND OF THE RELATED ART

Manual time sheet and billing systems are well-known in the services industries as a way for service providers to record time spent on a work activity and thereafter be paid for the work. In a typical example, a contractor may submit to a potential client an estimate of the cost for a particular job in terms of time and materials. If the client reaches agreement with the contractor on the terms, the contractor's time can be recorded so that the client can review and approve the time spent by the contractor in performing the work. Typically, the contractor will write or type onto a timesheet the amount of time the contractor has worked over the course of the contract, usually on a per time unit basis (e.g., hours per day). Depending upon the length of the contract, the contractor might regularly submit aggregated time sheets covering a pre-determined period (e.g., one month) to the client for approval and payment. If the client approves the time spent by the contractor, the contractor can then draw up an invoice to provide to the client for payment.

While many variations to the above-described scenario exist, there are many common deficiencies inherent in the general procedures currently used to record and submit time sheets for approval and subsequent billing. For example, if a worker works extra hours on a given day or works on a holiday, overtime pay may be required. Additionally, if a worker's time entries are inaccurate, not signed, or not approved by the client, billing and payment for the work can be delayed. Further, if multiple projects are being coordinated by a general contractor, individual time sheets must be pooled for each project, and then each of the projects must be pooled in order for the contractor or a vendor representing the contractor to approve and submit a bill for payment.

Attempts at automating time sheet and billing systems to date have not met with widespread success. What is needed is an automated, integrated time sheet and billing system which can (1) incorporate client, timekeeper (e.g., contractor) and contract details, (2) receive, record and track individual time entries per timekeeper, (3) communicate time sheets to clients for approval in a client-desired format, and (4) upon approval, automatically generate invoices for submission to the client for payment. In addition to the above, what is needed is a customizable solution to time recording and billing that can accommodate multiple billing cycles, multiple languages, multiple currencies as well as local employment practices and regulations.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention provides a system and method that improve upon past manual practices and processes of time

reporting and billing. The present invention manages contract workflow from end to end, i.e., from requisition definition to payment ("req to check"). The present invention further streamlines the number of vendor contacts while allowing for maintenance of relationships through fair and open processes. The present invention further provides a consultant/contractor submission and tracking system (CSTS) and back office workflow management system (BOSS) to track and report vendor activity and contractor spend. The timesheet component of the present invention provides efficient management of the client/contractor interface for the provision of payrolling, invoicing, specialized reporting, tax payments and year end tax requirements, for example.

The present invention can be used in any industry or employment relationship where in-house labor is tracked by time and/or where supplemental contract labor is required. In one embodiment, the present invention employs a sophisticated on line time reporting system to enable contractors (e.g., timekeepers) to report their time. This system enables the contractor to report time worked at a project level. When the contractor submits a time sheet for approval, the component parts can be sent to the individual client managers to obtain their approval for their component projects. Upon receipt of the individual approvals, for each project component can be submitted to the client for payment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a schematic diagram illustrating the interaction of users with various components of the present invention.

FIGS. **2** and **3** are block diagrams showing sample interactions among users of the present invention in a thin client embodiment.

FIGS. **4** and **5** are flow charts illustrating sample steps in the candidate submission and time recordation and billing aspects, respectively, of one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **6** is a schematic diagram showing various elements of the contract data input functions of the present invention.

FIG. **7** is a schematic diagram showing various elements of the language translation and currency conversion aspects of the present invention.

FIG. **8** is a schematic diagram illustrating an example time sheet front-end process in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **9** is a schematic diagram illustrating an example time sheet approval and bill presentment process in accordance with the present invention.

FIGS. **10** through **14** show flow diagrams illustrating example time input and billing procedures associated with various embodiments of the present invention.

FIGS. **15** through **44** are example screen interfaces showing aspects of a manager interface in accordance with the contractor management component of the present invention.

FIGS. **45** through **64** are example screen interfaces showing aspects of a supplier interface in accordance with the timekeeper management component of the present invention.

FIGS. **65** through **69** are example screen interfaces showing aspects of a consultant interface in connection with one embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

As shown in FIG. **1**, the system **10** of the present invention includes a management component **12** in two-way communication with at least one client **14**, at least one vendor/

supplier **16** and at least one timekeeper **18**. The term "client" in this context refers to an entity contracting with one or more workers to receive performance, typically in the form of specified services, from the one or more contractors performing the work. The present invention allows the client **14** to review, approve and monitor the time usage of their contractors. Purchasing and accounting departments, for example, can monitor and evaluate the entire contract performance process at any time. A "client manager" can be a client user of the systems and methods of the present invention. The term "vendor" or "supplier" in this context refers to an entity that supplies contract resources, such as a placement or temporary contracting agency. Such entities typically act as an intermediary between qualified individuals and companies and clients desiring their employ. The terms "timekeeper", "contractor" and "consultant" can be used interchangeably in this context to refer to individuals who are employed by the client to provide performance of a contract, typically in the form of services. A "managing consultant" can be an individual associated with one or more contractors, either as part of the contractor entity or the vendor entity, who might use the systems and methods of the present invention for coordinating placement and billing activities of individual contractors. In one embodiment, management component **12** is provided in the form of a secure web site accessible via a public network such as the Internet, for example.

As shown in FIG. **1**, management component **12** includes sub-components such as access/login component **20**, candidate submission and tracking system (CSTS) component **22**, contract data/details input (CDI) component **24**, document tracking system (DTS) component **26** and timesheet component **28**. In one embodiment of the invention, components **24**, **26** and **28** can be referred to as the back office services system (BOSS) of the present invention. A billing component **29** can also be part of management component **12**, as shown in FIGS. **1** and **2**, or can be a separate component interacting with management component **12**.

Access/login component **20** provides a level of security to the present invention, by requiring any entity accessing the management component to be appropriately authorized and provided with at least one element of security (e.g., password, spoken input, fingerprint scan). CSTS component **22** allows client **14** to present requisition information to the system so as to receive qualified candidates for a particular job, and also allows vendors **16** and even individual contractors **18** to submit one or more candidates (which may be themselves, in the case of a contractor submission) in response to the requisition notice from the client. In short, CSTS component manages the candidate submission workflow from requisition to hire, tracks job status and candidate information, and reports on hiring process and other metrics.

CDI component **24** allows for the creation, editing, extension, reporting, storage and integration of contract details associated with a contracted-for job, which can trigger certain business rules affecting the timesheet and billing system of the present invention as will be described more completely hereinafter. DTS component **26** provides for the management, reporting, storage and tracking of documents and communications affecting components **22**, **24**, **28** and **29**, including invoicing and payment, as will be described more completely hereinafter. Timesheet component **28** provides interfaces and communications necessary to input, transmit and report timesheets for a particular contractor on a particular project, receive feedback and/or approval of the transmitted timesheet from the client, and process the timesheet for billing once approved. Timesheet component is the primary interface for the contractor. Billing component **29** interacts with timesheet component to automate processing of invoices and payment in connection with approved timesheets, as will be described more completely hereinafter.

As described herein, certain exemplary embodiments of the invention can be implemented using a plurality of computers which, depending on circumstances, may communicate over one or more networks of computers such as, e.g., a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), a public network, such as the Internet, for example and/or another network. In various embodiments, as described herein, one or more servers, client computers, application computers and/or other computers can be used to implement one or more aspects of the invention. As an example, management component can be a single computer having memory and programming sufficient to accommodate the requirements of sub-components **20**, **22**, **24**, **26** and **28**. Alternatively, individual dedicated computers can be provided with memory and programming to accommodate the requirements of a respective component or sub-component. In one embodiment, the invention can be deployed in an application service provider (ASP) format, with users accessing the invention using a public network, such as the Internet, for example.

Illustrative computers for use with the present invention can include, for example, a central processing unit, memory (ROM, RAM, etc.), digital data storage (e.g., hard drives, etc.), input/output ports (e.g., parallel and/or serial ports, etc.) and data entry devices (e.g., keyboards). User computers may contain, in some embodiments, browser software for interacting with the server such as, for example, using hypertext transfer protocol (HTTP) to make requests of the servers via the Internet or the like. In addition, various computers can include other protocols as needed to effectuate communications described therein, such as, for example, file transfer protocol (FTP) for transferring, uploading and/or downloading files and/or the like.

Additionally, in some exemplary embodiments, the system can use relational databases, such as, for example, employing a relational database management system (RDBMS) program to create, update and/or administer a relational database. The RDBMS can be adapted to take Structured Query Language (SQL) statements entered by a user or contained in an application program and create, update and/or provide access to database(s). Some illustrative RDBMS's include Oracle™ databases, and IBM DB2™ databases. In some illustrative embodiments, one or more user computers can be provided, such as, for example, as a LAN-based system. The user computers can include an appropriate operating system, such as, for example, Windows NT™ or other systems known in the art. The system can also provide an object based graphical user interface (GUI) on one or more user computers.

In some illustrative embodiments, process steps can be carried out via computers by way of their central processing unit (CPU), which can communicate with a set of input/output (I/O) devices over a bus. The I/O devices can include, for example, a keyboard, mouse, video monitor, printer and/or other devices. The CPU can communicate with a computer readable medium (e.g., conventional volatile or non-volatile data storage devices) and/or memory over the bus. The interaction between a CPU, I/O devices, a bus and a memory will be appreciated by those of ordinary skill in the art. Memory can include, for example, data and can also store software. The software can include a number of modules for implementing the steps of processes, such as computer implemented steps of the processes described herein. Conventional programming techniques can be used to implement these modules.

In at least one embodiment of the present invention, the various methods described herein can be implemented in computer program products for use with a computer system. This implementation may, for example, include a series of computer instructions fixed on a computer readable medium (e.g., a diskette, CD-ROM, ROM or the like) or transmittable to a computer system via an interface device, such as a modem or the like. The medium may be substantially tangible (e.g., communication lines) and/or substantially intangible (e.g., wireless media, infrared, etc.). The computer instructions can be written in various programming languages and/or can be stored in one or more memory devices, such as semiconductor devices (i.e., chips or circuits), magnetic devices, optical devices and/or other memory devices. Transmission can occur using appropriate known communications technology.

As shown in FIG. **2**, one embodiment of the present invention allows a client **14** and its vendors **16** and sub-tier vendors **19** to interact with management component **12** such as via a thin client interface. As shown in the embodiment of FIG. **2**, invoice/billing component **29** is incorporated to allow the client **14** to view and approve contractor invoices, and to further allow bills to be automatically generated. It will be appreciated, in this embodiment, that both approved vendors **16** and sub-tier vendors and/or independent contractors **19** are in two-way communication with a vendor access component **17** of management component **12**. In this embodiment, vendor access component **17** can include timesheet component **28**, a supplier inquiry system (SIS) **76** and a retail sales tax component (RST) **34**. Vendor access component **17** can be part of management component **12**, or can be logically or physically separate from management component.

As shown in FIG. **3**, SIS **76** allows administrative personnel **13** as well as suppliers, such as approved vendors **16** and sub-tier vendors and independents **19**, to access timesheet information **60**, reports **62**, tables **243**, records **246** and e-mails **247** formed in the operation of the present invention. Also, while FIG. **2** shows an embodiment of the invention with a billing option, it will be appreciated that the present invention can also operate in a thin client environment with no billing option. In such an embodiment, approved vendors can view vendor-specific information directly through a separate vendor access component **17**.

RST component **34** facilitates accounting and reporting of retail sales tax, which may or may not be attributed depending upon the jurisdictions involved in a particular client's employment of a particular contractor. In one embodiment, if the client is not exempt from sales tax, the tax would be added to the invoice at the time of presentment to the client for payment. If the client is not subject to retail sales tax, the present invention can facilitate completion of a purchase exemption certificate (PEC), as described below.

Regarding sub-tier suppliers, when a new sub-tier supplier is registered, the supplier must provide all required documentation, whereupon a central administrative authority will activate access for the sub-tier supplier. Each new supplier representative to be added must also go through a registration process. In one embodiment, both a central administrator and the primary contact for the sub-tier supplier need to approve access.

During the contract setup process, the sub-tier supplier must define a contract relationship. The first step is to describe the client details if they are not already available in the system and accessible to the sub-tier supplier. The second step is to describe the contractors details if they are not already available in the system and accessible to the sub-tier supplier. The third step is to describe the contract relationship and provide details of the options and parameters relative to the contract. Such details can include, for example, payment cycle, billing rate, contract expiry date and provisions, purchase order terms, notification parameters, timesheet recording parameters, invoice and payment specifications, language designation and currency designation. The sub-tier supplier can also add, change or terminate the contract via this process.

In one embodiment, in addition to approved suppliers, sub-tier suppliers are provided with online real time access to details of their contracts at any time of day, week, month or year via SIS **76**. The communications component of the present invention, which can be part of DTS in one embodiment, can issue alerts to the sub-tier suppliers and any managing consultants according to business rules which identify matters of concern, such as purchase order (PO) exhaustion, contract expiry, time sheet rejection, and/or missing time sheets. It will be appreciated that the sub-tier suppliers can use the present invention to track the processing of any invoice for their contractor from initiation up to completion, including receiving an indication of where the invoice stands in the process, as well as date and time stamps indicating when every relevant event was completed.

In order to invoke the timesheet and billing management features of the preset invention, certain factors should be in place or certain preliminary events should occur. For example, there should be a client and a contractor to use the present invention. FIG. **4** illustrates example process steps involved in requisitioning labor for performance for the client. As at **40**, the vendor and/or supplier of contractor assistance is inputted, and access to the vendor is granted via password or the like as at **42**. Available jobs are then loaded as at **44** and presented for viewing by the vendor as at **46**. Upon finding appropriate job matches for candidates affiliated with the vendor, the vendor can submit such candidates as at **48**. Client can then select candidates for interview and make offers as deemed appropriate as at **49**. Example user interfaces associated with the above steps will be described in connection with accompanying figures hereinafter.

FIG. **5** illustrates sample process steps involved with contracting with a contractor, receiving timesheets from the contractor and providing payment from the client. As at **50** in FIG. **5**, the selected candidate can accept the client's offer of work and the candidate's information can be inputted into the system. A contract can then be sent to the vendor for the candidate as at **51**. Once the candidate is admitted for work as a contractor as at **52**, the contractor can be provided with access to the system of the invention as at **53**. During course of performance of the work and as agreed by contract, the contractor can then input time into the system as at step **54**. This time is then presented to the client for approval in accordance with the details described hereinafter, and if the client is agreeable to the entered time, the client notifies the system of approval of the contractor's time as at **55**. The system of the present invention then approves the invoice presented by the contractor/vendor and issues payment as at **56**. The vendor then receives payment as at **57**. Example user interfaces associated with the above steps will be described in connection with accompanying figures hereinafter.

One aspect of the present invention is the ability to document and manage contract information on an individualized basis. Step **51** in FIG. **5** refers to sending a contract for work to the vendor. Once the contract is approved and executed by the parties, contract details can be input into and/or extracted by contract data input (CDI) component **24**. In one embodiment, a client database is provided which stores client details, a contractor database is provided to store contractor details, and a contract database is provided to store details of the

contract. In a further embodiment, a separate component such as CDI component **24**, for example, can be used to extract details from the client and contractor databases to generate the entry into the contract database, thereby defining the contract relationship to the utmost detail. In one embodiment, this component can be called the "Costanza" component.

In one embodiment, the system specification can support multi-lingual and multi-currency (e.g., bill in one currency, receive payment in another) environments, even within the same contract relationship. By storing contract details, the present invention can customize certain aspects of the user interfaces. For example, with knowledge of the length of a contract (e.g., two months) and expected working hours (Monday-Thursday, 8 hours per day), the timesheet interface for the contractor can be customized. As another example, if the client operates in the Spanish language and deals in Euros for currency, the client interface can be reflected as such. In one embodiment of the invention, access to appropriate currency conversion and language translation databases is provided. In another embodiment, a link to a current currency conversion database on the Internet is provided to ensure the most up-to-the-minute conversion rates. In all such cases, a user profile created and stored using interfaces **14**, **16** and/or **18**. The language preference of each user dictates the language that the user will work in, and this applies to all screens, e-mails and error messages. One person can send an e-mail in the language of their preference (i.e. Spanish) while another person receives the same e-mail in the language of their preference. With regard to multi-currency, a client can be billed in one currency while the contractor is paid in another currency. In one embodiment, currency conversion rates are set each day, and the rates are reported in the details of the invoice/billing document.

All elements of the system can be brought together at execution time including field/tab labels, warning messages, page text and e-mails, for example. All such data can be stored in tables as at **243** in FIG. **6** and brought together at execution time. As an example, if the user speaks French, then the French data is retrieved, and if the user speaks English, the English data is retrieved. Support for a new language can be provided by loading the data base that contains the data elements. FIG. **7** is a schematic diagram showing how a French-speaking client **14** dealing in Euros as currency can interact with an English-speaking supplier **16** dealing in Canadian dollars using the system of the present invention. As shown in FIG. **7**, translation **111** and conversion **112** component can be integrated with management component **12** to provide the translation and currency conversion respectively necessary for seamless operation by client and vendor. It will be appreciated that the invention can operate equally well if only one of the currency conversion or language translation is necessary. For example, where both client and vendor deal in Canadian dollars, but the client's preferred language is French and the vendor's is English, then only the language translation component **111** is invoked. Where the two parties operate in the same language, but deal in different currencies, only the currency converter component **112** is invoked.

As further shown in FIG. **6**, CDI component can store client records in a client records database **246**, and can store client document tables in a document table database **243**. CDI can further store e-mails in an e-mail backup database **247**. Administrative personnel **13** can manipulate the set up and contents of client records database **246** and document table database **243** via table maintenance utility **244**. Also, administrative personnel **13**, approved vendors **16** and sub-tier vendors **19** can access SIS and CDI, which can further communicate with each other. As described earlier, SIS permits access to items such as, for example, timesheet information **60**, reports **62**, tables **243**, records **246** and e-mails **247** formed in the operation of the present invention.

It will be appreciated that the present invention provides an internal security architecture sufficient to ensure that any sub-tier suppliers only have access to their own contractor and client details and to no other supplier's details or to the broader company (client) details. Entries are subject to automated comparison to internal records to ensure that client names and locations are correct and not entered incorrectly, the client parameter defaults which are subject to customization at the contractor level are compatible with the client manager's preferences and the client's preferences, and entries are stamped according to at least the date, time and author to provide a complete audit trail.

As shown in FIG. **8**, time sheet system **28** and billing system **29** interact to process timesheets as required (e.g., "blue ink" signature, electronic) by the client **14**. Timesheet requirements can be indicated by the client at the time contract details are entered into the system of the present invention. In one embodiment, timesheet component **28** includes a contract term implementation component to automatically set timesheet recordation and transmission protocols pursuant to the contract terms and/or the client's preferred format indication. Once a contractor has finalized his or her timesheet, if the timesheet is permitted by the client to be submitted in electronic form, the time sheet system can submit it to client as at **101** for client review. If the timesheet must be submitted with "blue ink" signature, a hard copy **30** can be printed using timesheet component **28**, signed and faxed or otherwise transmitted as at **102** to billing system for presenting to the client. In the case where the contractor and client are in close physical proximity to one another, a blue ink signature time sheet can be hand delivered to the client for approval. If the timesheet is not acceptable, the client can provide explanatory feedback as at **103** to the contractor via the timesheet system **28**. Such feedback can also be directed by the client to the client's accounting department and/or the contractor's managing consultant. If the timesheet is acceptable, the client can indicate such as at **104** to billing system **29**.

As further shown in FIG. **8**, the CDI component **24** of the present invention can store contract details in database **246** for use by billing system component **29**. Billing component **29** can retrieve items such as the invoice history for the client, or purchase order details, and forward such information to the client **14** as at **105** at the appropriate time. It will be appreciated that billing system component **29** can also present hard copies **31** of invoices and billings, and can transmit information **32** using electronic data interchange (EDI) to clients. As described earlier, RST component **34** facilitates accounting and reporting of retail sales tax, which may or may not be attributed depending upon the jurisdictions involved in a particular client's employment of a particular contractor. In one embodiment, if the client is not exempt from sales tax, the tax would be added to the invoice at the time of presentment to the client for payment. Such information can be presented in an RST allocation report as at **37**, for example. If the client is not subject to retail sales tax, the present invention can facilitate completion of a purchase exemption certificate (PEC) **39**, as required.

The front-end time sheet component **28** of the present invention complements the billing component. The time sheet component provides the primary interface to the contractor. Business rules can be employed to minimize input errors, such as, for example: (1) automatically cross footing all calculations; (2) identifying federal, state holidays according to

the work location with cautions being made when data is entered to ask the worker to be sure that they worked on a holiday; (3) comparisons of hours worked to individual client policies; (4) formatting of all screens and communications (i.e. e-mails) in the recipient's language of choice; and (5) implementation of complete purchase order (PO) management and control. In managing purchase orders and in performing other functions, the present invention can provide messaging to various parties via communications component. For example, communications component can note cautions to contractors when budgeted funds are not sufficient to pay for reported hours, can note cautions to client managers with forecast of when budgeted funds will be (i.e. have been) depleted, and can further note cautions to contractors and clients alike when contracts are going to expire or be exhausted of funds, etc. The present invention further provides for rejection of contractor data entry according to client specific business rules. Communications component can store default triggers or triggers specially indicated at the time the contract details are input, so as to know when to inform the appropriate parties.

With regard to purchase order management and control, it will be understood that contracts are commonly for a fixed elapse time and/or for a maximum dollar amount. In one embodiment of the present invention, the time sheet system obtains information from CDI to track the contract expiry date. Also, the time sheet system can be implemented so as not to allow the contractor to enter time past the contract end date, which can be the last day on the timesheet. Further, the system of the present invention can provide a warning if the PO amounts are nearly exhausted, depending on client requirements. In one embodiment, e-mails are not automatically sent to the client, and the client is informed of purchase order status when the timesheet is approved online, again depending on client requirements.

In one embodiment, the time sheet may allow the contractor to enter time past the contract end date (if an option parameter for the client permits doing so). In this embodiment, the system can caution the contractor with a warning that the contract has been completed and there may be no payment made on that basis, and an e-mail or other communication can be sent to the managing consultant alerting to the attempted entry after contract completion. In both instances, prior to the schedule completion date, the system sends an e-mail to the managing consultant, if any, reminding of the expiry.

In one embodiment, the time sheet system of the present invention tracks the remaining approved funds, and the balance remaining is reduced with each issued invoice. When each invoice is submitted for electronic approval the client receives an indication of the funds remaining in the PO, the working days until the PO is exhausted, and the projected completion date for PO exhaustion at a normal consumption rate. When the PO is close to exhaustion (the number of remaining days for the warning is a parameter in the billing system), e-mails or other communications can be sent to the managing consultant, informing of the PO exhaustion. The managing consultant can intercept these e-mails and modify/terminate in his/her sole discretion. When the PO funds have been exhausted, the time sheet system will caution the contractor that time entered does not have funds in the PO to pay and he/she may not be paid.

With regard to the billing component, once the invoice details have been determined, the resulting invoice can be presented to the client in a variety of ways. For example, a single hard copy invoice with time sheet can be provided for each contractor. Alternatively, a consolidated invoice can be provided, with consolidation being by client, client department, line manager, or project. It will be appreciated that invoices can be presented in hard copy format or electronically as in portable document format (PDF) or using electronic data interchange (EDI).

The time sheet and billing components can also interact with DTS and/or communications component to integrate system-generated communications via e-mail in support of the automation of the overall invoicing and billing process. For example, when a new contract is set up, the contractor can be contacted by e-mail and provided both a welcome and an introduction to the time sheet system with instructions on its usage and related process. Also, when a contract is nearing expire, the contractor can initiate the sending of requests to the system manager requesting information on the status of the contract and its possible extension. Further, when a contract is completed, the system can send post contract surveys to client managers to solicit their report on the performance of the contractor. Where a client contract requires written notification, the system can ensure that such notification is sent according to the terms and conditions of the contract. In one embodiment, the client can specify not only the format of time report submissions (e.g., blue ink, electronic, etc.), but also the preferred notifications to be sent to the client and/or the contractor (e.g., contract is nearing expiry, PO maximum has been exceeded, reasons for denying approval to timesheets). The client can further specify business rules and/or automated controls for system operation with regard to one or more vendors and/or contractors, as described more completely below.

FIG. **9** illustrates an example electronic time sheet approval and bill presentment process in accordance with one aspect of the present invention. As shown in FIG. **9**, completed time sheet **40** can be forwarded for client approval **41** electronically (with a copy to DTS component **26** as indicated at **42**), which approval can then be sent electronically as at **43** to DTS component **26**. DTS component can notify the time sheet submitter that the time sheet has been approved, and can also store timesheet approval information in SIS database **45**, so as to be available to SIS and thereby allowing vendors to track approvals accordingly. Upon receipt of individual approvals for each contractor, DTS can submit a consolidated report **46** supported by individual invoices **48** for each project to the client for payment. The consolidated invoice data can be stored in database **47**.

Regarding time sheet approval, during the billing cycle, the contractors record the time that they worked. The details are entered at a level as specified by the client (e.g., by project, by day, or by other agreed upon unit). During the time sheet completion process, the process of entering time is subject to one or more automated controls. For example, a maximum purchase order (PO) amount can be entered to control time input. In such a process, the billing system of the present invention maintains a running record of the funds accrued under a PO and ensures that the contractor does not enter time which when multiplied by a "per unit" rate would exceed the maximum funds allotted under the assigned PO. A series of integrated warnings and calculations of projected days to PO exhaustion can be reported to the client manager, vendors and sub-tier vendors during the life of the contract as a means of facilitating cost management. Such notices or warnings can be pre-established for all contracts as default attributes, or can be actively managed, added and/or changed by the client. In one embodiment, notifications and warnings can be actively established by a vendor, sub-tier vendor and or contractor with or without the approval of the client.

Another example control measure is the expiry date. Using this control, the billing system knows the last day of the contract and will not permit the contractor to input hours for any day after that contract end date. Another example control measure is statutory holidays. The billing system knows the work location and the statutory holidays which apply to that jurisdiction. The system will provide the contractor with cautions if the contractor enters hours worked in a statutory holiday.

With regard to submission reminders, timely submission of time sheets is enhanced by automated reminders. Each billing period the system monitors those contractors who have not submitted a time sheet for the billing period. A parameter in the system tells it the number of days before or after the end of the billing period that a time sheet should have been received by. The system uses this detail in combination with its knowledge of the billing period end date to determine if a reminder e-mail should be sent to the contractor asking for them to complete and submit the time sheet. For example, if a company wants the time sheet in within 2 business days after the end of the billing period, then the parameter would indicate +2 (2 days after) and if the time sheet were not submitted 2 days after the end of the billing period the e-mail would be sent.

Upon receipt of the complete invoice and supporting time sheet, which can be in secure Adobe™ PDF format, for example, the client **14** can e-mail an approval **43** to be sent to DTS and/or billing component, or the client can print out the time sheet and sign the time sheet, thereby providing a "blue ink" signature, which can then be returned to and processed by the billing component **29** for eventual payment. Depending on communication times, the entire process of time sheet approval through to the return of the complete invoice can occur substantially in real-time.

With regard to "blue ink" signature requirements, the present invention appreciates that many corporate entities or clients require an original signature for timesheet and invoice processing. Such signatures are provided the name "blue ink" and can be required of the contractor, the client, or both. The challenge in such situations is one of obtaining electronic approval so that the invoice billing can proceed while also providing a hard copy time sheet for signature. One embodiment of the present system requires that the contractor print off a time sheet and present it for signature. At the time the contractor indicates that the time sheet is submitted, the electronic time sheet can be locked, whereby no further changes are allowed to it. Then, the billing system is informed of the hours on the time sheet and an invoice is created and put into a pending file. When the contractor sends in the signed time sheet (blue ink), an operator tells the system that a time sheet has been received and indicates the hours on it. If the hours on the blue ink time sheet match the hours on the invoice, then the invoice is released. The time sheet and invoice are matched up and sent to the client.

In another embodiment of the present invention, electronic presentation is used. In this embodiment, when the contractor has completed the time sheet, it is submitted for approval, and the time sheet is transmitted to the client manager who can review and approve or reject it as previously described. Upon approval, the billing system is notified of the approval. In one embodiment, for blue ink clients, the timesheet can be converted into a PDF or similar attachment, the invoice can be prepared as a PDF attachment, and both can be e-mailed back to the client manager. The completed time sheet can include an indication that it has been approved, along with the date and time of approval. The client manager can then print them off and apply a "blue ink" signature.

Regarding the electronic approval process, it will be appreciated that the time sheet system of the present invention records time data as provided by the contractor, and time is entered within the selected billing cycle. In one embodiment, the time sheet supports at least fifty-two (52) standard billing cycles, with the ability to introduce an unlimited number of other billing cycles. Further, within one line manager, there can be multiple billing cycles depending upon need. The billing cycle is unique by contract at the contractor level, and at the end of the billing cycle, the contractor can submit the time sheet for approval. Upon submission by the contractor, the billing system is notified of the submission and provided details of the hours. At this point, generation of the invoice can occur and generated invoices are kept in a print pending file. In one embodiment, the client is then notified of the submission by e-mail and provided a hot link to the time sheet for review. Upon approval by the client, the billing system is notified of the client's actions, and if the time sheet is rejected the invoice in print pending is highlighted.

It will be appreciated that management component **12** can include software to facilitate certain business processes as part of a comprehensive contract management service (e.g., the Procom SoftLanding™ program, commercially available from Professional Computer Consultants, Ltd. of Toronto, Canada) in connection with the present invention. Such business processes can include, for example, corporate governance, document management, contractor performance reviews, project budget control and reporting, rate analysis, "psuedo-employment", retail sales tax information and cost projection. It will also be appreciated that the present invention can be used in stand-alone mode as shown in FIG. **10**, as well as alongside a vendor or client's own timesheet and/or billing software. As shown in stand-alone mode in FIG. **10**, contractor time input **70** is stored in a database of time sheet details **72**, and processed by management component **12** and billing component **29**. In processing, management component **12** can store time details in a separate database **74** which can be accessed by manager **14** and vendor **16** through SIS **76**. SIS can show details stored in database **74**, and can further provide other information such as contract expiry or contract termination information, time sheet deadline information, and accounts receivable and invoice information.

With regard to invoice format, the manner in which details can be presented to the client can vary. They can be project based, whereby the contractor can report details by a project code. They can be presented at the end of the billing period. One report can go to the line manager which lists the work of that contractor for the manager. This report may reflect one or many contractors on the same project. The line manager must indicate his/her approval. A second report is subsequently sent to administration for each contractor. It lists the individual projects that the contractor worked on. It is supported by the sign offs received from the line managers. Alternatively, it can be handled in a straight forward manner, where the contractors hours are reported for each day, totaled for the month, and/or one invoice is submitted for each approved time sheet. Invoices can also be consolidated, where multiple contractors work for the same client or same client manager. All invoice details for each contractor can be consolidated onto one invoice to the client or client manager.

With regard to invoice submission, standard submission (e.g., hardcopy) is where the invoice is printed onto paper and submitted. Electronic submission is where the invoice is submitted electronically using the client specified electronic presentation method. Some options are: EDI, PDF, Ariba, E-mail, and Excel.

The information required by the various systems varies according to the client's preferences as they pertain to time reporting, time submission, invoicing, etc. Some of the required data elements are: (i) PO number and maximum dollars, (ii) Department number, (iii) Job name, description, type, (iv) applications worked on, technology description.

FIG. **11** shows the processing of information in sequence in both the system of the present invention and the outside system, where time is input as at **70** and processed through the outside client time reporting system **71**, with details subsequently stored in database **72**. The remaining processing takes place much as in FIG. **10**, giving reference to the same reference numbers as above described in connection with FIG. **10**.

FIGS. **12** and **13** show the invention and the outside system operating in parallel at the beginning of the accounting period, wherein time is input as at **70** and **90**, respectively, and time sheet details are stored as at **72** and **92**, respectively. The outside accounting system **94** then processes the information in parallel with management component **12** and billing component **29** (in the example in FIG. **13**, billing occurs after reconciliation), and reconciliation occurs as at **95**. If reconciliation is successful, the invoice is processed for payment as at **96**. SIS **76** is also shown in communication with database **72** to enable reporting and communications as described above in connection with FIG. **11**.

FIG. **14** shows a sample schematic of accounting and payment processing in connection with the present invention. As shown in FIG. **14**, invoice/billing system **29** interacts with time sheet system **28** and SIS **76** as previously described. Invoice/billing system can issue payments via commercially accepted systems such as through electronic funds transfer (EFT) **89**, Paychex™ **80**, direct deposit **81**, electronic data interface (EDI interface) **82** based on client particulars as at **83** and via cheque **98**. Invoice/billing system can also track payments due as commissions, through communicating with commissions sub-system **84**, which can issue commission statements **85**. Commissions sub-system **84** and invoice/billing system **29** can also forward appropriate invoice, billing, payment and accounting details to an internal accounting component **86**. Accounting component **86** and invoice/billing system **29** can record and track all issued and outstanding cheques **98**. The issuing bank **87** can reconcile cheques as at **88** and can track EFT transfers and bank deposits as at **89**, which can then be communicated to accounting component **86**.

One aspect of the present invention is the "paid when paid" element. The payment option chosen determines when the payment is made. Payment can be upon the completion of the billing period, payment can be a predetermined number of days later (i.e. 30 days) or payment can be made, only when the client has paid for the provided services ("paid when paid"). As for the billing period, the units of work can vary as an option. Some of the more common units are hourly, daily, professional day, weekly, monthly, fixed price.

It will be appreciated that in each step described, the present invention can record and time stamp every system and user action, to provide full information to any inquirer as to what events happened and when.

The present invention incorporates various portals to enable clients, managers, suppliers and sub-suppliers to inquire into the status of their personal matters or responsibilities within the system process. In one embodiment, all parties have secure access with an integrated internal profile controlling the extent and level of detail that they can have access to. Sub-tier suppliers can provide links between individual invoices which the main supplier has processed on their behalf, and can also provide the sub-tier supplier's internal reference numbers to facilitate communication. At every step of the time reporting and invoicing and accounting processes, each action is recorded and time stamped as a means of fully informing any inquirer as to what happened and when.

Sample client manager user interfaces are shown in FIGS. **15** through **44**. It will be appreciated that a "manager" for purposes of the present application can be a client manager or a project manager for a particular client who has contracted to have timekeepers provide work. A "managing consultant", on the other hand, can be associated with vendor and/or consultant as described above. As shown in the interface **150** in FIG. **15**, the manager can access management aspects of the present invention by logging in as at **152** using login procedures as known in the art. As shown in FIG. **16**, once logged in, the manager can view and manage timesheets for an individual consultant/timekeeper on a particular contract. In the interface display **160** shown in FIG. **16**, the consultant and or timekeeper is identified as at **162** for each timesheet, along with the source and/or supplier as at **164**, and the pay period **165**, time worked **166**, contract end **167**, and timesheet status **168**. Navigation and selection windows and icons as are known in the art can also be provided to enable the manager to view, print, approve or reject particular timesheets for the given consultant.

As shown in the interface **170** in FIG. **17**, particular time period details **172** can be displayed for a given consultant in calendar format, for example. As shown in the interface **180** in FIG. **18**, upon approval of a given submitted timesheet, the manager can receive a confirmation message as shown at **182**, indicating that the system of the present invention has proceeded to notify the consultant. If the manager elects to reject the timesheet, a window can be provided as at **192** in interface **190** of FIG. **19**, and the manager can enter the reason for rejecting the timesheet. As shown in interface **200** in FIG. **20**, once the consultant's time sheet has been completed, the consultant can sign and send the timesheet electronically for approval, or if required, the consultant can print out the timesheet and subsequently sign the hard copy of the timesheet for transmittal to the client by fax or other means, as described above. Such traditional signature method can be called a "blue ink" signature method. As shown in the interface **210** in FIG. **21**, notification of a time sheet submission can be by email, and appropriate details can be provided in the body of the email as at **212**.

As shown in interface **220** of FIG. **22**, the manager can view all contracts under management, including the supplier **221** of the timekeeper, the timekeeper's name **222**, manager's name **223**, start date **224**, end date **225**, and rate **226**, for example. As shown in interface **230** of FIG. **23**, contract **232** and client **234** details can be entered and/or displayed for editing. As shown in interface **240** of FIG. **24**, required skills **242** can be entered and/or displayed for editing, such as might occur in creating a requisition for contracted labor, for example. As shown in interface **250** of FIG. **25**, consultant details can be entered and/or displayed for editing as at **252**. As shown in interface **260** of FIG. **26**, supplier details **262** can be entered and/or displayed for editing. As shown in interface **270** of FIG. **27**, client contact information **272** can be entered and/or displayed for editing.

As shown in interface **280** of FIG. **28**, the manager can also manage requisitions using the system of the present invention, with a requisition management window shown at **282**. As shown in FIG. **29**, a new job requisition interface **290** can have input areas for various elements such as type of job (contract or full time) **292**, start date **293**, location **294**, posi-

tion title **295**, duration **296**, billing rate **297**, job description **298**, and mandatory skills **299**, for example. As shown in interface **300** of FIG. **30**, the manager can view and manage requisitions according to job number **302**, for example. FIGS. **31** and **32** show sample user interfaces **310** and **320**, respectively, for changing the status of a particular job requisition already entered into the system of the present invention. FIG. **33** shows a sample interface **330** for searching for job requisitions by such example criteria as contractor name **332**, supplier/source **334**, position title **336** and job number **338**. FIG. **34** is a sample interface **340** for creating and generating relevant reports related to managed requisitions. FIGS. **35** and **36** show interfaces **350** and **360** which allow vendor/supplier information to be entered and/or edited.

FIG. **37** shows a user interface **370** identifying various report types which might be prepared for the manager, including for example, timesheet list by supplier **371**, timesheet not submitted by supplier **372**, timesheet history by consultant **373**, timesheet submission status **374**, invoice list by supplier **375**, and pay period summary **376**. FIG. **38** shows a sample report **380** of timesheets by supplier, including contract number **381**, manager name **382**, contractor name **383**, cycle **384**, period end **385**, status **386**, units **387**, and type **388**, for example. FIG. **39** shows a sample report **390** of timesheets not submitted for a given supplier using the same delimiters as shown in FIG. **38**. FIG. **40** shows a sample report **400** for timesheet history by consultant. FIG. **41** shows a sample report **410** for timesheets submission status. FIG. **42** shows a sample report **420** for invoice lists for a given supplier. FIG. **43** shows a sample billing summary **430**. FIG. **44** shows a sample profile view **440** for the manager interacting with this subset of functionality associated with the present invention.

FIGS. **45** through **64** show sample user interfaces as might be viewed and interacted with by a supplier using the system of the present invention. FIG. **45** shows a sample timesheet **450** as approved by a client, including the contractor's name **452**, client name **454**, timesheet details **456** and various navigational tools as is known in the art. FIG. **45** also shows a text field **458** in which a supplier can submit comments for consideration by other system users, such as a supplier's accounting department, for example. FIG. **46** is a sample interface **460** indicating a supplier's ability to manage requisitions using the present invention. In FIG. **47**, a sample interface **470** is shown which allows a supplier to submit candidate information for a particular requisition answer. Such information can include, for example, name **471**, job number **472**, availability **473**, rate **474**, skills summary **475**, and comments **476**. FIG. **48** shows a sample supplier interface **480** for selecting a particular requisition to manage, and FIG. **49** shows the detail **490** of a selected requisition **492**.

FIG. **50** indicates various report options **500** which can be selected and run by a supplier user of the present invention. Such reports can be, for example, a purchase order dollar expiry by manager, which is shown in greater detail in interface **510** of FIG. **51** including items **512** such as purchase order number, client name, contractor name, rate, dollars approved and dollars remaining, for example. Other purchase order (PO) reports from interface **500** can be: a purchase order date expiry by manager (shown in greater detail in interface **520** in FIG. **52**), a purchase order list by manager (shown in greater detail in interface **530** in FIG. **53**), and a purchase order detail (shown in greater detail in interface **540** in FIG. **54**).

Timesheet reports can also be provided as shown in interface **500** in FIG. **50**, including timesheet list by manager (detail shown in interface **550** in FIG. **55**), timesheet not submitted by manager (detail shown in interface **560** in FIG. **56**), and timesheet submission status (detail shown in interface **570** in FIG. **57**). Billing reports can also be provided, such as full contract details as shown at **580** in FIG. **58**, **590** in FIG. **59** and **600** in FIG. **60**, as well as billing summary report **610** in FIG. **61**. A sample contractor details list report by salesperson **620** is shown in FIG. **62**, and a list of active contractors report **630** is shown in FIG. **63**. A sales balancing report **640** is shown in FIG. **64** and a sales report **650** is shown in FIG. **65**.

Consultant interfaces can also be provided, as shown, for example, in FIGS. **66** through **69**. FIG. **66** shows a sample timesheet **660** with fields **662** for timesheet data entry. FIG. **67** shows a sample confirmation page **670** indicating successful timesheet entry. FIG. **68** is an interface **680** allowing a selection of a timesheet history report, and FIG. **69** shows a sample timesheet history report **690**.

The invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from the spirit or essential characteristics thereof. The present embodiments are therefore to be considered in all respects as illustrative and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the claims of the application rather than by the foregoing description, and all changes which come within the meaning and range of equivalency of the claims are therefore intended to be embraced therein.

What is claimed and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is:

1. An apparatus for managing time related work activities of at least one worker for at least one client, said apparatus comprising:

(a) a computer system, said computer system including a time sheet component for electronically transmitting to at least one client information related to time worked by at least one worker, said time sheet component further including a time sheet interface for allowing a first user to electronically record time worked by at least one worker for a given time period;

(b) said computer system further including a management component for automatically analyzing time electronically recorded by said first user by comparing time electronically recorded for a specified period by said first user to at least one predetermined cost management criteria to obtain cost management information relating to time electronically recorded by said first user; and

(c) said computer system further including a communication component operably associated with said management component for automatically communicating to at least one user of said computer system cost management information obtained by said management component.

2. An apparatus as set forth in claim **1**, wherein:

(a) said management component is a web site accessible by said client and said first user by way of a public network.

3. An apparatus as set forth in claim **1**, wherein:

(a) said at least one predetermined cost management criteria is one of: (i) federal holidays, (ii) state holidays, (iii) at least one client specific business rule; (iv) required period to submit time sheet, (v) contract expiration; and (vi) purchase order exhaustion.

4. An apparatus as set forth in claim **3**, wherein:

(a) said communication component communicates to at least one vendor cost management information obtained by said management component.

5. An apparatus as set forth in claim **1**, wherein:

(a) said management component is accessible to said client so that said client can vary said at least one predetermined cost management criteria.

6. An apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein:
(a) said cost management information communicated to said at least one user includes at least one of funds remaining and days until purchase order is exhausted.

7. An apparatus for managing time related work activities of at least one worker for at least one client, said apparatus comprising:
(a) a computer system, said computer system including a time sheet component for electronically transmitting to at least one client information related to time worked by at least one worker, said time sheet component further including a time sheet interface for permitting a first user to electronically record time worked by at least one worker for a given time period; and,
(b) said computer system further including a management component for preventing said first user from recording time on said time sheet interface where time sought to be entered does not comply with at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration.

8. An apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein:
(a) said computer system further includes a communication component for informing at least one user other than said first user that time was attempted to be recorded that does not comply with said at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration.

9. An apparatus for managing time related work activities of at least one worker for at least one client, said apparatus comprising:
(a) a computer system, said computer system including a time sheet component for electronically transmitting to at least one client information related to time worked by at least one worker, said time sheet component further including a time sheet interface for permitting a first user to electronically record time worked by at least one worker for a given time period; and,
(b) said computer system further including a management component for treating differently time sought to be entered by said first user that does not comply with at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration from time sought to be entered by said first user that does comply with at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration.

10. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein:
(a) said management component provides a notification to at least one user that time sought to be entered does not comply with at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration.

11. An apparatus as set forth in claim 9, wherein:
(a) said management component prevents entry of time that does not comply with at least one predetermined criteria relating to one of purchase order exhaustion and contract expiration.

12. An apparatus as set forth in claim 11, wherein:
(a) said management component is accessible by said client to allow said client to alter said at least one predetermined criteria to allow for entry of time even though the time sought to be entered did not comply with said at least one predetermined criteria prior to alteration by said client.

13. A method of electronically managing time related work activities of at least one worker for at least one client, said method including the steps of:
(a) providing an electronic time managing system for managing time related work activities, said time managing system including a time sheet component accessible by said at least one client and a first user;
(b) operating said time sheet component to allow a first user to electronically record time worked by said at least one worker for said at least one client;
(c) electronically monitoring time recorded by said first user to ascertain information relating to a purchase order issued by said at least one client for services of said at least one worker; and,
(d) electronically transmitting updated purchase order information to a user based on said time electronically recorded by said first user.

14. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein:
(a) said updated purchase order information includes funds remaining for a given purchase order.

15. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein:
(a) said updated purchase order information includes number of working days until a given purchase order is exhausted.

16. A method as recited in claim 13, wherein:
(a) said updated purchase order information includes a notice to at least one user that a given purchase order is nearing exhaustion.

17. A method of electronically managing time related work activities of a plurality of workers for a single client, said method comprising the steps of:
(a) providing an electronic time managing system electronically accessible by said client and each of said plurality of workers;
(b) operating said electronic time managing system to allow each of said plurality of workers to electronically record data relating to time worked for said client;
(c) automatically consolidating said data relating to time electronically recorded by each of said plurality of workers; and
(d) operating said electronic time managing system to allow at least one user to electronically access said consolidated data.

18. A method as recited in claim 17, further including the steps of:
(a) consolidating said data relating to time electronically recorded by each of said plurality of workers to form a consolidated invoice; and,
(b) electronically transmitting said consolidated invoice to said client.

19. A method as recited in claim 18, further including the step of:
(a) storing time sheet details for each of said plurality of workers, said time sheet details include at least time worked by each of said plurality of workers for a given period;
(b) operating said electronic time managing system to allow said client to electronically access said time sheet details.

20. A method of electronically managing time related work activities of at least one worker for at least one client, said method comprising the steps of:
providing an electronic time managing system electronically accessible by said client and said at least one worker for managing time related work activities;
operating said electronic time managing system to allow at least one user to input information specific to said at least one user;
creating a user profile for said at least one user based on information input by said at least one user; and,
operating said electronic time managing system based on said user profile.

21. A method as recited in claim **20**, further including the step of:

(a) limiting access to said electronic time managing system based on said user profile.

22. A method as recited in claim **20**, further including the step of:

(a) monitoring said user profile to ascertain at least one criteria of said at least one user; and,

(b) adapting said electronic time managing system to satisfy said at least one criteria.

* * * * *